

Women Teachers in Post- Presbyterian Scotland: Gender, Faith and Identities

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DEDICATION

For my mother, one 'far above rubies', with love and gratitude

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
ABSTRACT	1
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	3
Evolving Research Interest	3
Historical Context for Women and Women Teachers in Scotland	6
Women In Scotland	6
Women Teachers in Scotland	8
The relationship between Protestant Religion and Education in Scotland	9
Scottish Educational Policy and the Cultural Contexts of Primary Teaching in Scotland	12
Relevance of Study	17
CHAPTER 2 - POWER, GENDER AND FAITH: SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	18
Theorising Power	18
Drawing on Gramsci	19
Drawing on Foucault	23
Theorising Gender	25
Drawing on Connell	26
Drawing on Butler	31
Theorising Religion	33
Christian Identity as 'Standpoint'	34
What is faith?	37
CHAPTER 3 - LIVES AS STORIES: THE USE OF LIFE HISTORY METHODOLOGY	43
Qualitative Research and Life History Methodology	43
The Qualitative Paradigm	43

Life History Methodology	44
Using Life Histories in the context of this study	47
A Sense of Match	48
The Particular Use of the Method	51
How narratives should be understood:	52
As stories which are researched/solicited	52
As stories which are topical and meaning-making	52
As stories which are both individual and collective	53
As stories which are emplotted	53
As stories which are reflexively and subjectively constructed	54
As stories which are interpretive	57
Research Design:	58
Selecting participants	58
Gathering narratives	59
Reconstructing (Analysing) the narratives	62
 CHAPTER 4 - 'YOU ARE EVE': WOMEN AND PRESBYTERIANISM	 66
IN SCOTLAND	
Histories	66
The Church of Scotland	66
The Free Church of Scotland	74
Theologies	80
The Bible – authorship, infallibility and andocentric	80
The 'maleness' of God	83
Generic Masculine language in worship	85
The doctrine of the Trinity	86
Male headship, female submission and the creation order	88
Implications of a 'creation order' theology	91
The Bible and the body – doctrinal positions on abortion and clothing	97

CHAPTER 5 - SILENCED LIVES: WOMEN IN CHURCH AND SCHOOL	103
Gender and Orthodoxy	104
Family	105
Work	108
Submission	110
Visuality and Visibility	113
Speaking Out	119
 CHAPTER 6 – NARRATIVES	 123
CARRON'S STORY	123
Biographical Overview	123
At School – Life as a Woman Teacher	124
At Home – Life as a Wife and Mother	133
In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith	135
MAIRI'S STORY	144
Biographical Overview	144
At School – Life as a Woman Teacher	145
At Home – Life as a Wife and Mother	151
In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith	154
JANE'S STORY	165
Biographical Overview	165
At School – Life as a Woman Teacher	166
At Home – Life as a Wife and Mother	171
In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith	174
KATHERINE'S STORY	182
Biographical Overview	182
At School – Life as a Woman Teacher	182
At Home – Life as a Wife and Mother	189
In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith	192

JESSIE'S STORY	198
Biographical Overview	198
At School – Life as a Woman Teacher	199
At Home – Life as a Wife and Mother	206
In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith	209
MARGARET'S STORY	215
Biographical Overview	215
At School – Life as a Woman Teacher	215
At Home – Life as a Wife and Mother	223
In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith	227
MY STORY	231
Biographical Overview	232
At School – Life as a Woman Teacher	233
Life At Home	240
In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith	243
 CHAPTER 7 – INVESTMENTS, DISSONANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:	 251
AN ANALYSIS	
INVESTMENTS	252
Investment in Protestant Christianity, and in religious notions of work	252
Personal Faith	252
Attitudes to religion in schools	256
Understanding teaching as Christian Service	257
Investment in 'Naturalness'	258
Mothering and Child-centred pedagogies	258
Ideology of Separate Spheres	262
Embodying 'Naturalness'	264
Bodies in the classroom	264
Bodies in the church	266

DISSONANCES	269
Teaching (working) Itself	269
The Academic	269
Involvement in Policy	271
Religion in School	273
The Self	274
Feminisms	278
Seeking Place	279
Exercising Power	282
RESOLUTIONS	284
Resistances	284
Distances	285
Relationships	286
Belonging	289
Self Exception	290
 CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION	 293
Key Themes	293
Further Research	297
Some Final Reflections	300
 REFERENCES	 304
 APPENDICES	 317
Appendix 1 – Initial letter to participants	318
Appendix 2 – Second Letter to participants	321
Appendix 3 – Initial Interview Debrief	322
Appendix 4 – Sample transcript one	323
Appendix 5 – Sample transcript two	329

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself, that the work is my own, and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers an exploration of the intersections between Christian faith, gender and primary teaching understood and examined as work. By drawing on the lives of women primary teachers who are members of Presbyterian churches in Scotland, I seek to explore the issue of the apparent conformity, resulting marginalization, and 'silencing' of women in the structures of both school and church, and to explore women's apparent collusion in these processes. Through this enquiry into the interrelationship of institutions and experience, I offer an exploration of the relationship between meaningful individual lived experiences and the cultural and meaning-making institutions of education and religion.

Methodologically, this research adopts an interpretive approach to life-history narrative which reflexively and self-consciously explores interconnections in the lives of the participants. The stories of six women, purposively selected, are juxtaposed in order to explore the complexities of the social relations of gender and the processes of gender and power within the historic and socio-political worlds of education and religion. The versions of 'reality' I offer are, therefore, constructed by and contingent on my own understandings and perspectives. This methodological approach is underpinned by theoretical framework which combines ideas of power as hegemonic (in a Gramscian sense), notions of gender as 'performance' (in Butler's sense) and an understanding of the centrality of the socially constructed body to teaching as work. It further draws on Habermas's critique of the religious/secular divide in contemporary public life in western societies.

The findings suggest that the women participants draw on various religious and pedagogical discourses to construct their relative silence and invisibility in school and church as both 'natural' and chosen. Religious and theological discourses of the 'natural order', pedagogical discourses of child-centredness and teaching-as-care, and 'secular' discourses of gendered norms coalesce to produce women who understand their roles in school, home and church as necessarily involving the sacrifice of self. Further, for Christian women teachers, dissonances arise when the

need to nurture the 'whole' child is frustrated or displaced by the hegemony of the secular-normative within contemporary schooling.

This thesis addresses gaps in the existing literature in the areas of both Scottish religion and teachers' lives. It points towards faith as a key shaper of the gendered identities of some Scottish women teachers, and highlights the desirability of a re-conceptualisation of the inter-connection between protestant religion and primary schooling in contemporary Scotland. It suggests that conceptualizations of primary teaching as work are infused, for the subjects, with the ideologies of Christian religion and that such ideologies operate in gendered ways to maintain hegemonic relations of power within the institutions of church and school. By acknowledging faith as an integral component of the subject's world, and allowing for the authenticity and integrity of her faith position, it attempts to open up spaces in which to pursue an understanding of the particular ways in which struggles between structure and agency are negotiated by religious women in educational settings.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This introduction briefly explains the evolution of the ideas in the thesis. I present the key contextual factors relating to Primary teaching and Protestant religion in Scotland, and go on to outline my own positionality in relation to this research and the ways in which my personal orientation to the topic has developed. Finally, I briefly suggest ways in which the study may be found to be relevant in the Scottish context.

Evolving Research Interest

My own experiences as a Primary teacher in Scotland, and the processes of data collection and analysis in my previous research, suggested a prevalence of conformist discourses of femininity among and about Primary teachers. Further, the prevailing constructions of femininities and masculinities, and the discourses surrounding the feminisation of teaching, appeared to be used by teachers to construct men within the profession as ‘other’, and by the educational establishment and the media to legitimate calls for more male teachers in Primary schools. I wished to address some of the themes which arose from my previous research into compliant behaviour in Primary teachers (MACDONALD, 2009), particularly questions relating to gender and self-identity. To this end I thought it important to look both at identities held by teachers, and at ways in which teachers are defined in wider professional settings. (I use the concept of ‘discourse’ to mean a use of language which is unified by implicit common assumptions, which in turn direct the ways in which people think, talk and act within a given social world. This is defined more fully in chapter two.)

While there is an increasing body of work on the pedagogical implications of gendered practices and discourses, there appeared to be some unanswered questions on their implications for teacher culture, particularly in the Scottish context. Further, it seemed likely that the policies and practices particular to Scottish Education had

contributed to constructions of gender within the professional teaching environment. To separate notions of femininity and masculinity within teaching cultures from the equally gendered constructs of national identities in Scotland, therefore, seemed problematic.

I set out, then, to pursue a qualitative study of the processes and discourses through which the Scottish Primary school teacher is constructed and, more especially, the ways in which the individual teacher constructed her social self and negotiated her identities within a feminised profession, with particular reference to the intersections between her gendered and her national identities. One emphasis of feminist studies has been the cultural representation of women - how women are represented in everyday life and texts, how we represent ourselves, and how we respond to those representations (BONNER et al., 1992). I wanted, therefore, to extend this concept to the cultural representation of a specific group of women, namely Scottish Primary teachers. While there are numerous and contradictory discourses surrounding teachers (mothers, carers, professionals, scholars, workers), I wished to explore which had been and were currently dominant in Scotland. Further I wished to ask to what extent we as teachers have reproduced (or re-represented) particular images through our own conformity with the dominant discourses.

These were my interests, and my intentions, when I began the study, in October 2002. However, what I now present is something rather different, although with some elements of continuity. I am seeking to understand, still, the production of gendered identities and their interconnection with school cultures but my focus on Scottish identities shifted somewhat to concentrate on gendered religious identities in a uniquely Scottish context, namely Presbyterianism, the form of Protestantism that emerged in Scotland following the Reformation. This enquiry emerged partly from my own background in Scottish Evangelical Presbyterianism. Indeed, I was, in parallel to my studies in education, pursuing a personal interest in the intersection between feminism and Christianity, little thinking that this could be of relevance to my PhD study. But the interest emerged also from the responses of the women in the study. Because the participants were recruited in part from my own broader social

and professional networks, many shared my interest in, and my lived experience of, Christian faith. When I began to gather data, I found myself talking to participants about the role of a religious heritage in shaping Scottish identities, and this led to discussion of their wider experiences as women of faith. It seemed to me that not only did Scottish schooling and the Scottish psyche owe something to Scotland's Protestant past, but also that the ways in which these women performed their various social roles was shaped and influenced by their faith, and by the cultural practices associated with forms of Presbyterian religion in Scotland. Further, it became apparent that, while a wealth of literature existed on women Primary teacher identities (although little in the Scottish context), the role of religion in shaping these identities had been little explored, and this, consequently, became central to my research endeavour.

I should make clear at the outset that my own relationship with this research and the cultures and contexts on which it draws is an intensely personal one. For 16 years I worked as an un-promoted Primary teacher in Early Years contexts in Scottish Primary schools, and, as outlined above, my interest in the ways in which women Primary teachers are constructed, particularly in terms of power positioning, emerged directly from my own lived experience in this area. Further, having been brought up within the Free Church of Scotland, my fascination with Presbyterian religion, and particularly with the ways in which women are positioned by such religious cultures, is also unashamedly personal. My study of the intersections of these aspects of identity in the lives of the participants, therefore, is in some senses a form of auto-ethnography. For this reason I have chosen to offer my own story as a seventh narrative, and, while I do not draw on this directly in the final discussion, it serves to contextualise my orientation towards this research, and, I hope, highlight my own reflexivity.

Historical Context For Women And Women Teachers In Scotland

Within this introduction, I offer some background material on the historical context for women and for women teachers in Scotland, the relationship between religion and schooling in Scotland, and the education policy context during the working lives of the teachers in the study. Although these themes are not central to the research endeavour, and so are not dealt with in-depth within the thesis, they are of direct relevance to the study and so are necessary to contextualise the data and discussion offered.

Women in Scotland

Being Scottish can be said to be a particularly problematic position in terms of popular cultural identities (WHYTE, 1995). On the one hand Scottish national identities are associated with social justice (HEARN, 2000) and religious integrity, with educational and military prowess (HAGUE, 2001, WALKER, 1996), with scientific and literary achievement (WALKER, 1996) and with physical robustness. Such Scottish identities are celebrated within Scotland and claimed and coveted across the globe. On the other hand, Scottish-ness tends, in some popular parlance, to be denigrated as parochial (tartanry etc), mean, authoritarian, and religiously bigoted (DEVINE, 2000). In these forms, to be Scottish is to be constructed as distasteful.

If Scottish identities are thus problematised, Scottish female identity is particularly so. The positive Scottish attributes described above arguably position women on the margins of Scottish-ness. Historically, educational prowess is embodied in the '*lad o pairts*', and military might and rural ruggedness are the domain of hegemonic masculinity. The scientific and literary giants were constructed as male figures and, until very recently, visible social and religious leadership was confined to men. Insofar as these Scottish identities are positive, women have been absent (or at least, their presence has been obscured). Insofar as Scottish-ness is conceptualised as authoritarian and repressive, Scottish women have historically been constructed as

combining a cultural deference to authority with their own deference to men. Scottish womanhood is therefore constructed as peripheral and insignificant.

Breitenbach (BREITENBACH, 1997) sees Scottish women as doubly marginalised. They are marginalised in relation to Scottish men in historical terms (at least in documented history). Myth, stereotype and idealism, she argues, have been used to describe women's role in Scottish society. Historians (where they acknowledge women at all) and novelists have contained women within tokenistic stereotypical generalisations (HENDRY, 1992). Breitenbach sees Scottish women as marginalised also in relation to English women in that they are written out of British feminist narrative and dominated by English cultural and political hegemony within the UK (BREITENBACH et al., 1998).

In 21st century Scotland, the marginalisation of women is, of course, less marked than in past history, and it is arguable, in any case, that women may not have been as marginal in the public domain as their absence from historical narrative might lead us to conclude (BREITENBACH, 1993). Opportunities for women in the professions and the arts have increased, and women are more visible across the spectrum of public life. In the mid-nineties there were more women than men in Scotland's labour force, albeit predominantly in low-paid and part-time jobs (MCCRONE, 1992). A key feature of this change has been the control women have achieved over their fertility, freeing them, to some extent, from domestic servility (MCIVOR, 1996). Another, of course, is access to education. It is argued, however, that patriarchal values remain deeply embedded within the Scottish family (MCIVOR, 1996) and within society - as recently as the mid-seventies, Scottish studies of social mobility read women's class position as that of her male partner (MCCRONE, 1992). Further, women continue to be peripheral in debates on Scottish national identity: *The paradox facing women in Scotland is that the debate on nationalism in Scotland has ignored gender, and feminist debates on nationalism have ignored Scotland* (BREITENBACH et al., 1998:61).

The notion of Scottish national identity is, then, necessarily constructed in a masculine image (BREITENBACH, 1997). Although it has been argued that attitudes towards gender today are no more conservative in Scotland than in other parts of Britain or Europe (MACINNES, 1998), the images and representations associated with Scotland remain gendered, in ways which render women invisible. In other words, without refuting MacInnes's findings that Scots claimed to hold egalitarian views on gender issues, it may be that there is still a strong 'imagining' in Scotland that women are/should be marginal and that such imaginings are perceptually powerful, if factually inaccurate (ANDERSON, 1983).

Women Teachers in Scotland

Historically, teaching in Scotland, like all professional occupations, was a male preserve. Only in the later 19th century when the implementation of the Education (Scotland) Act (1872) resulted in an upsurge in demand for teachers, were women acknowledged as worthy of training (HOLMES, 2000). They did not receive equal pay with men holding the same qualification until 1962 (MARKER, 2000). The feminised Diploma course, designed exclusively for women, included compulsory needlework and domestic science (MARKER, 2000). In the early part of the 19th century, whilst teaching was not restricted to single women (the marriage bar was in place only in the inter-war years of the 20C), women were normally expected to resign on marriage, and most did, with some exceptions. Consequently, elementary teaching became associated with spinsterhood. The increased demand for women workers during World War II, and the lifting of the marriage bar in 1945, paved the way for women to remain in the classroom after marriage and child-bearing (HOLMES, 2000). From this point in history until the present day, there has been a strong perceptual association between Primary teaching and motherhood in Scotland (HOLMES, 2000).

Women currently comprise 92% of Primary teachers and the number of men in the profession is in decline (SCOTTISH-GOVERNMENT, 2009). Although men are in such a small minority, they are proportionally much more likely than women to attain promoted posts (SCOTTISH-GOVERNMENT, 2009). Unpromoted

classroom teaching in Scottish Primary schools has therefore come to be conceptualised as women's work (MARKER, 2000).

The Relationship Between Protestant Religion And Education In Scotland

The *First Book of Discipline*, drafted in April 1560 to provide an organisational framework for the new national religion, laid down that, "every several kirk have one schoolmaster appointed" (CAMERON, 1972:130). This was linked specifically to the need to provide the church itself with an educated ministry: an urgent priority in view of the fact that the new order put its emphasis not on the repetitious administration of the Sacrament but on preaching. In addition to the parish schools, Knox and his associates also proposed the ideal of a college in "every notable town", the curriculum to major on "the arts, at least Logic and Rhetoric, together with the tongues" (CAMERON, 1972:131).

This vision could have been fulfilled only if the Reformed Kirk had inherited the considerable patrimony of the mediaeval church. In the event, that patrimony was grabbed by Scotland's nobility, and Knox's vision lay unfulfilled. Only in 1696 did Parliament give it some impetus by passing an Act for the Settling of Schools (MECHIE, 1960). This Act required heritors (usually local landlords) to provide a commodious house for a school and a salary for the schoolmaster. It also stipulated that the heritors could be called to account if they failed to make the statutory provision. Even so, the ideal fell short of fulfilment, and even when it could be claimed that there was "a school (of some sort) in every parish" the claim was often meaningless in view of the enormous extent of many parishes, particularly in the Highlands.

At the Disruption (1843), all the teachers who cast in their lot with the Free Church were dismissed from their posts in the parish schools. The Free Church almost immediately set up its own Education Scheme and by 1869 there were an estimated 598 schools and 64,000 pupils under the oversight of the Free Church's Education Committee (BROWN, 1890). Mechie (MECHIE, 1960) estimates that another

10,000 pupils were attending schools connected with the Free Church though not under its official denominational supervision. These included the Ladies Schools, supported by Free Church Ladies Associations, such as the one founded in Edinburgh in 1850. Their aim was to bring basic Primary education to the most destitute localities of the remote Highlands and Islands. The teachers were students for the Free Church ministry. They attended the theological College during the winter but taught in these Ladies Schools during the long summer vacation (BROWN, 1890).

Teachers in the parish schools were not required to undergo any professional training or possess any formal qualifications (MECHIE, 1960). It was largely thanks to the efforts of David Stow, a close associate of the Evangelical leader, Thomas Chalmers, that this was altered. Stow was a passionate educational reformer, strongly averse to corporal discipline and to the awarding of prizes, but also painfully conscious of the deficiencies of the Scottish Education System (MECHIE, 1960). One effect of his work was the setting up of the Glasgow Educational Society in 1834, and it was this Society which turned its attention to establishing Normal Colleges for the training of teachers. The first such institution in Britain, the Dundas Vale Normal College in Glasgow, was opened in 1837 (MECHIE, 1960). Government support was made dependent on the College property being transferred to the Church of Scotland (which also founded another similar College in Edinburgh in 1842).

The Free Church itself founded two normal colleges to train its own teachers. The Glasgow Free Church Normal College was established in 1845. In Edinburgh, the Free Church Normal School, after some years in rented property, eventually found a home at Moray House in 1848 (EWING, 1914:Vol 1).

The movement for a national Scottish system of education probably owed a great deal to the new division within Presbyterianism following the Disruption of 1843. From the beginning, the leaders of the new body, the Free Church of Scotland, threw their weight behind the movement, conscious that the nation was ill served by denominationally divided education (MILLER, 1870, RAINY and MACKENZIE,

1871). But the path towards a national system was far from easy, and between 1849 and 1872 no fewer than ten Scottish Education Bills were presented to Parliament (MECHIE, 1960). Some of the difficulties were of a religious nature. Even then, secularists were advocating that religion should form no part of public education; and some noted Presbyterians also had grave doubts about delegating to the state the teaching of religion. Other Presbyterians objected to the whole idea of a national scheme, arguing that education was the responsibility of parents, not the state. Roman Catholics, too, were concerned about their rights being overlooked, while many Protestants objected to an indiscriminate form of endowment which would mean, in effect, state funding for Roman Catholicism. But it should not be overlooked that the fate of such Bills in the House of Commons depended almost entirely on the English vote. On more than one occasion a clear majority of Scottish MPs voted for a Bill only to see it overturned by an English majority (RAINY and MACKENZIE, 1871).

A Scottish Education Bill was eventually passed in 1872. This Act did not make any statutory provision for teaching religion, but it did recognise that this had been the “use and wont” in Scottish education and conceded that this might be continued (MECHIE, 1960). With this slender assurance Presbyterians voluntarily (and gradually) transferred their schools to the state system. The Free Church continued, however, to provide separate training for teachers; and even in the 1970s and 1980s the Colleges of Education at Aberdeen, Jordanhill and Moray House continued to provide separate Religious Education courses for students of Free Church background.

Thus, the inter-relationship between Protestant religion and schooling in Scotland can be traced from the Reformation to the present day, and has become embedded in the imagining of Scotland. McCrone cites the Kirk and the school, along with the law, banking and the media, as key civil institutions in Scotland which reinforce national identity (MCCRONE, 1992) while Walker suggests that identification with either is regarded as a marker of Scottish-ness (WALKER, 1996).

It could be argued, therefore, that such histories have shaped and defined the relationship between Presbyterianism and Scottish-ness in ways which are particularly marked in the realm of schooling. *The identification of the Kirk with a broad, enabling form of education provision has remained a staple of Scottish folklore* (WALKER, 1996:251). In Protestant Scotland, learning to read was regarded as important so that ordinary people could read their own Bibles. In a sense, education was a religious ideal. Walker suggests that the 'lad o' pairts' success stories, a key aspect of positive Scottish identities, are popularly assumed to owe a debt of gratitude to the religiously driven education system, which offered equality of opportunity to all. (That is, at least, to all males. It is argued that the egalitarian nature of Scottish education has masked gender inequalities (FEWELL and PATERSON, 1990)). Walker argues that the Presbyterian churches continue to view themselves as the source of a vital educational heritage which gave birth to iconic Scottish geniuses, and which will continue to do so.

Scottish Education Policy And The Cultural Contexts Of Primary Teaching In Scotland

Scottish Primary schooling in the first half of the 20th century tends to be associated with robust instruction in the 3Rs, a formalised curriculum, and a teaching force comprised of single women. The second half of the 20th century, however, saw significant changes. The teachings of Friedrich Froebel (based on those of Pestalozzi and, in turn, Rousseau) began to have some impact on the nature of Initial Teacher Education. In 1965 the Primary Memorandum (SCOTTISH-EDUCATION-DEPARTMENT, 1965), which Darling calls '*Scotland's Emile*' (DARLING, 2003:28), became official policy in Scottish Primary Schools. It emphasised the role of the child as actively constructing knowledge, and the role of the teacher as facilitator:

The acquisition of knowledge and skills, once the main aim of education, is no longer as important as it was... Much more vital today... are the fostering of intellectual curiosity, and the development of the capacity to acquire knowledge independently (SCOTTISH-EDUCATION-DEPARTMENT, 1965:18).

Comprehensive secondary schooling made way for the dropping of the 'Qualifying' exam needed to select children for the older meritocratic system at the end of their Primary schooling. This child-centred approach was thus officially sanctioned, but the politics of progressivism had been developing for some time, fuelled perhaps by the radical social climate of the 1960s.

Following the 1965 Memorandum, Scottish Primary schools enjoyed a relatively fluid and flexible curriculum, the implementation of which depended to a large extent on teachers themselves (DARLING, 1999). However, the early 1990s saw the introduction of the 5-14 Programme, which offered a framework curriculum covering 5 core subjects – Language, Maths, Expressive Arts, Environmental Studies and Religious Education. The framework purported to be suggestive rather than prescriptive, but it was accompanied by the introduction of standardised testing. Although teachers and parents successfully resisted the original policy that these would be implemented at set times in a child's schooling (Primary 4 and Primary 7), and won an agreement by which teachers would implement tests at their own discretion, Her Majesty's Inspectorate put considerable pressure on schools and local authorities to test, and to provide statistics on test 'results' which were then used as markers of a school's success. So, despite resistance, relative to England, to a return to traditional methods (DARLING, 1999), the 'system' in Scottish Primary schools became increasingly prescriptive (GATHERER, 1999), resulting in dissonances for teachers who had invested in the child-centred approaches of the previous decades.

Another major change in Scottish Primary schooling from the mid-20th century resulted from the lifting of the marriage bar to teaching in 1945, allowing women to remain in the classroom after marriage, and to return to teaching after child-bearing, although this remained rare. This has contributed to the sense that Primary teaching in Scotland is 'feminised' a phenomenon widely acknowledged, if little understood. Like the processes of gender, the processes of feminisation are more complex than a purely numerical or historical analysis would allow.

Theorists of the processes of feminisation highlight four different ways in which the feminisation of Primary teaching is being / has been produced. First, the feminisation of Primary teaching is bound up in the dichotomy of feminine private (and masculine public) space. In the 20th century, teaching was practically the only respectable career accessible to educated women, the only possible avenue for freedom from the constraints of domesticity. And yet discourses which conceptualise teaching as an extension of motherhood, and the Primary classroom as a home-from-home, belie that sense of freedom. Teaching then becomes an alternative form of domesticity in the private sphere (DILLABOUGH, 1999), denying women teachers public space, and power (TAMBOUKOU, 2000). The private space of the classroom is therefore the site through which the 'naturalness' of women teachers is constructed (TAMBOUKOU, 2000, STEEDMAN, 1985).

Secondly, feminisation is produced through the sexual division of labour - the allocation of particular categories of work to particular categories of people. This allocation in turn becomes a constraint on future practice (CONNELL, 1987). In the case of teaching, the care of little children is allocated to women. Over time, the teaching of little children by women becomes a social rule inhibiting men from becoming teachers of little children. In turn, woman teachers are constrained from entering alternative spheres of labour within the education system because their skills are concentrated on teaching little children. Thus, what started as sexual division of labour becomes legitimised as a technical division, combining a particular technical skill with femininity (CONNELL, 1987). Thus knowledges become gendered (LATIMER and OZGA, 2001). The construction of the sexual division of labour is about more, therefore, than allocation. It involves design, nature and organisation. The feminisation of Primary teaching, it is argued, has been strategic to maintaining status differentials. Groups that hold power try to reproduce the structure which gives them their privilege (CONNELL, 1987). The interests of male teachers are served by having a 'semi-profession' of women in place in the 'lower' stages of schooling (ACKER, 1995). Distance from that feminised space makes possible the claiming of higher status and salaries by men (LATIMER and OZGA, 2001).

Third, the feminisation of Primary teaching is produced through a relationship of women to education which positions them on the margins. While women are, at some levels, at the heart of Primary schooling, their relationship with education as an institution is problematic. Although the schooling of little children may not generally be regarded as academic (and that, in itself, is symbolic) it is at the very least the portal to the academy. But the academy, it is argued, is itself institutionally male (STANLEY, 1997). Mental labour is constructed as masculine (LATIMER and OZGA, 2001) and women are constructed symbolically as that which stands in opposition to rationality (DILLABOUGH, 1999). Women, then, it could be argued, are the ontological outsiders of the academic establishment. The distance between women teachers and the academy is further produced by the ways in which Initial Teacher Education, or teacher training, have been conceptualised. The gap between little children (and hence between those who teach little children) and the academy has been maintained and perpetuated by teacher training cultures. The preparation of teachers in specialist institutions distinct from (and characterised as inferior to) Scottish universities has created cultures which were (and to some extent still are) both cloistered and feminised.

Fourth, the feminisation of teaching is bound up in discourses which construct teaching as an extension of motherhood. There is a suggestion that the conceptualisation of teaching as 'motherhood' was/is also strategic on the part of the middle-class. Walkerdine (WALKERDINE, 1992) analysed the way traditional feminine virtues were established as part of the woman teacher's role of inculcating the values of a 'good bourgeois home'. Steedman (STEEDMAN, 1985) argues that middle-class women propagated their own view of 'the good teacher' through teacher training regimes (e.g. Froebel) which emphasised domestic virtue. Women teachers were encouraged to find job fulfilment through nurturing and caring. Failure to do so was to fail both as a teacher (the 'professional') and as a woman ('the feminine').

Her (Steedman's) voice from within the 'prisonhouses' has broken the silence, the taboo of speaking out about women's discontent of being with children, either as a mother or teacher or both (TAMBOUKOU, 2000:464).

Thus working-class women recruits to teaching were domesticated and made respectable.

The feminisation of teaching, however, is not without contradictions. It could be argued that later drives towards testing and results, such as those associated with 5-14, in effect defeminise teaching (LATIMER and OZGA, 2001). In addition, the increasing corporatisation of schooling has resulted in a disparaging of the ideas of progressivism, ideas which were constructed as feminine (MENTER et al., 1997) and blamed for educational under-performance. Current moral panics about women teaching boys, and the alleged effect which this has, not only on boys' academic performance, but also on their masculine identities (ASHLEY and LEE, 2003) have led to calls for teaching methods to become more 'masculinised'. *In recent years 'teacher professionalism' has been redefined by the state to reflect a certain strain of rationality which privileges male theories of the polity* (DILLABOUGH, 1999:378). Knowledges characterised as feminine are being displaced in favour of knowledges characterised as masculine.

This reproduction of masculine ideals through the concept of teacher professionalism leads to a devaluing of ideals typically associated with the feminine (DILLABOUGH, 1999). Yet this process of defeminisation does not appear to raise the status of women teachers, but rather *Primary school teachers are refigured as subjects who follow orders, multi-task, as well as implement instructions and procedures decided far from the classroom* (LATIMER and OZGA, 2001:3).

The feminisation of teaching, therefore, is not simply to be understood in terms of there being many women in the profession, or even that these women behave (or are constructed to behave) in particular ways (WALKERDINE, 1989). Rather it is an historical and social process, dependent on multiple factors, and at times contradicted by opposing discourses (LATIMER and OZGA, 2001).

Further, it could be argued that schooling continues to be, despite its feminisation, male dominated. Recent experiences of women in educational management suggest

that, at the highest levels, women are few in number and, where they are present, are isolated and marginalized (PENN, 1992, BOULTON and COLDIRON, 1998). Further, it is not only the women as persons who are peripheral, but what they often represent, namely education in the early years. Any study of women in the workplace therefore needs to recognise the ways in which women's work is valued within the context of patriarchal culture and its norms (BONNER et al., 1992). Research should endeavour to engage with the social structure and related practices of the work context, and with the ways in which gender relations are constructed in and through these, what Connell refers to as *the social relations of gender* (CONNELL, 1987).

Relevance Of Study

In an increasingly secular and multicultural Scotland, a work which is so grounded in a religious past, exploring the lived experience of what is now a small minority, might seem of limited relevance. Yet, as has been suggested, the imagined community (ANDERSON, 1983) that is Scotland today must surely owe at least something of its production to its Presbyterian past. In particular, Scottish society may have absorbed messages concerning gender which were promoted by the church. Further, as Jule points out, *worldwide the number of religious believers of various faiths is increasing. Even in the midst of secularism, religious faith remains relevant for many, maybe even for most* (JULE, 2008:67). So a study which explores how women of faith make sense of their social worlds is of relevance throughout Scotland and beyond.

Further, this study's examination of the ways in which women committed to child-centred pedagogical ideologies produce themselves may be timely in terms of recent Scottish policy developments. While the investment of my research participants in child-centred ideologies may be, in part, a chronological accident, in Scotland we see, in Curriculum for Excellence (SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, 2009b), a return to the rhetoric of child-centred pedagogy, despite what we might have learned from feminist critiques of such policies in previous decades.

CHAPTER TWO

POWER, GENDER AND FAITH: SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The Introductory chapter briefly outlined the key ideas that shaped my enquiry, and I turn now to an exploration of the theoretical concepts which might usefully be employed in such an enquiry. This focus on the intersection between religion and schooling in Scotland shapes the selection of particular kinds of theory that recognise and work across these social worlds and which are attentive to issues of gender and power. In addition, the study implies a need for a rationale for conceptualising the phenomenon of 'faith' which is central to the existence and perpetuity of Scottish Presbyterianism, and fundamental to the identities of the women whose stories I explore. For the analysis of those stories to be coherent and illuminating, I suggest that gender, power and religion are most usefully conceptualised, not as separate entities, but rather as processes which intersect, and at times coalesce. The following offers the theoretical perspectives which I judge best suited to achieving such coherence and illumination.

Theorising Power

A key aspect of my inquiry is into the way in which power appears to operate in the structures of schooling and religion in which my participants live and work. In particular, I seek to uncover how the relations of domination over individuals such as the women in this study are sustained within these sub-cultures. So, rather than asking what power *is* or where it comes from, I seek to employ a theoretical framework which illuminates the ways in which power is exercised and the effects of such exercises on my participants.

Drawing on Gramsci

Antonio Gramsci developed the theory of cultural hegemony (based on the Greek word meaning 'rule' or 'leadership', and emerging from Marxist philosophy) which described the processes through which workers in early twentieth century capitalist societies were dominated by the ruling class through a combination of coercion and consent. He understood capitalist communities to maintain control over the working class largely by means of an ideology which constructed bourgeois interests and values as both 'natural' and for the ultimate good of all classes, inducing them to work to maintain the *status quo*, and thus quelling dissent and unrest. It was, therefore, not only political and economic control, but also ideological control through which the dominant class succeeded in projecting its own intellectual and moral influence in such a way that the under-class accepted it as 'common sense', and thus gave their willing consent in both active and passive ways.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony... articulates... that the forms of our social and individual existences are not merely imposed upon us but sustained by us with our tacit if not explicit consent (GRUMET, 1988:4).

This theory has been adopted by sociologists to extend beyond an analysis of the state and of civic society in the broad sense to understand the sustained powerful ascendancy of prestigious elites within a range of cultural and subcultural groups. Such ascendancy does not imply total cultural dominance. Rather it is produced within what Connell describes as a *balance of forces* (CONNELL, 1987:184) which subordinates rather than eliminates non-conforming groups or individuals and allows for continued contestations and social changes. It is not absolute power. But the cost, for the individual, of resisting that power is to risk appearing to be at odds with the ideology held as the norm of the social group. Further, the power held by any given hegemonic regime is not permanent or fixed but rather fluid and changing. Because cultures are in constant shift and are the sites of contradictions and alternative and oppositional meanings, the consent given by the under-class must be continually re-won through ongoing reproduction and renegotiation of the ideology. Hegemonic power, therefore, must be understood as a process.

Such a theory of power seems to lend itself well to an exploration of the domination of teachers by what Humes refers to as the leadership class in Scottish education (HUMES, 1986). It can be used to understand

the establishment's control over policy and decision making and the teachers' effective exclusion from these processes by dint of the fact that their time is already over-stretched by their commitment to the classroom (MACDONALD, 2004:5).

The political or coercive element, therefore, (control of policy) merges with conditions that are taken by the people as 'given' and common-sense (teachers belong in classrooms) to reserve knowledge (and therefore power) to the leadership class, and to secure the legitimacy of the leadership class to sustain its dominance. Further, the theory of hegemony illuminates the power of the establishment to project its own ideologies of teaching onto practitioners in such a way that teachers adopt these ideologies as 'common sense' and as 'the natural order of things', even when the policies promoted by the leadership class may be at odds with teachers' own understandings in terms of the pedagogical practices that they involve. Thus the inequalities of status and opportunity which attend the unpromoted woman Primary teacher's role are legitimised to the point where they seem inevitable.

The dark irony and cruelty of hegemony is that teachers take pride in acting on the very assumptions that work to enslave them. In working diligently to implement these assumptions, teachers become willing prisoners who lock their own cell doors behind them (BROOKFIELD, 1995:15).

In this way, we have a conceptual framework for understanding the way in which teachers appear to give their active consent to positioning which renders them relatively powerless.

Gramscian hegemony moves beyond a simple polarity of domination and subordination into a combination of force and consent that... makes it particularly potent as a means of understanding the role of public education (ALEXANDER, 2000:162).

This understanding of power as in large part ideological is suited also to the study of religion. The ascendancy of one group over another which is deeply embedded in religious doctrine and practice has been understood by other theorists as hegemonic (CONNELL, 1987). In religious groups such as the ones in this study, the balance between coercion and consent may differ from that seen in the education setting. In

Evangelical churches, for example, the understanding of biblical text as infallible (or inerrant) provides such a strong synthesis of the political, the moral and the intellectual, such a level of given-ness about what ought to be, that the areas understood to be open to 'consent' seem limited. Yet what the leadership achieves through hegemonic processes is not so much the membership's belief in biblical text as inerrant, as the consent of the membership to adopt a very particular and very patriarchal interpretation of the text as the 'common sense' interpretation. Take this statement for example:

one of the major doctrines of Protestantism is the perspicuity (clarity) of scripture. In most cases the plain sense is the real sense, and it is accessible (according, for example, to the Westminster Confession) to the unlearned as well as to the learned (MACLEOD, 2008:1).

Yet the 'plain sense' referred to here is an interpretation of biblical text authorised and reproduced by generations of male theologians.

The consensual element in maintaining conditions of domination is well-documented in studies of American Evangelicalism. For example, Bartkowski & Read describe the way in which Evangelical women use rhetorical strategies to make sense of wifely submission by claiming that their submission is 'chosen' by them rather than required of them (BARTKOWSKI and GHAZAL READ, 2003). While such consent towards domination is perhaps more consciously and reflectively given than the 'spontaneous' consent of Gramscian working classes, the combination of such consent with the coercive powers of patriarchal biblical interpretation can be described and understood by adopting a Gramscian perspective on power. It is the way in which such practices become part and parcel of everyday life, part of the cultural air we breathe, that makes the Gramscian analysis persuasive.

While ideology is central to the concept of hegemony, Gramsci's theory relies on the interdependence of coercion and consent which balance each other reciprocally. Although dominance is secured for the most part by the consent of women teachers and women church members, there are points in the social worlds of education and religion in which the consensus and hegemonic order may be challenged. In the face of such challenges, the leadership class may be compelled to re-secure the social

order by means of coercion – by the explicit exercise of law or of force. For example, church leaders have at their disposal the sanctions of private or judicial admonition or of excommunication, and educational leaders the sanctions of professional disciplinary action or of termination of employment. It is testimony to the very power of the ideological that such sanctions are so rarely imposed. Yet were such coercive power absent, the processes of hegemony would be disrupted.

It should be noted that the institutions of education and religion in this study, while discrete, are related. Indeed since the strong interrelation between Presbyterianism and schooling in Scotland is well established (WALKER, 1996), it makes sense to understand the relations of domination in school and church as interrelated.

Hegemony is created and maintained not through the operation of cultural institutions such as the family system, universal primary education, the churches and mass media alone; but through the operation of all dominant institutions whether they have primacy or not. The conscious co-ordination of these various agencies in the maintenance of hegemony is unnecessary provided there is a moderately high level of institutional integration... (JESSOP, 1972:128).

One potential ‘misfit’ of the theory of hegemony to my study is its original emphasis on the economic dependence of the under-class on the dominant class through the technical means of production and through the social relations of production (BOCOCK, 1986). While teachers are economically dependent on their employers, church members are not, in most circumstances, economically dependent on the church. Conversely, the day-to-day function and maintenance of religious institutions depends on the economic support of its members, giving them, in some limited sense, the ownership of this particular ‘means of production’. However, for married women, their traditional economic dependence on the husband creates a condition of dependency which amounts to a dependence on the church where the husband is committed to the ideology (and therefore himself under the power) of the church. Although the women in my study, as teachers, enjoyed the potential for financial independence from their husbands, to take up such independence might be understood as deviant, so central to 20C Protestantism (and particularly to Evangelical Protestantism) is the normative ideal of a bread-winning husband and a

home-making wife (GALLAGHER, 2003). Further, for the Evangelical women in the study, any role or function which they might fulfil within the life of the church is economically dependent on the will of those in leadership. While the women contribute from their salaries to the coffers of the church, their say on the use of their contributions ends at the collection plate.

While there may be limitations and ambiguities, therefore, in the application of the Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony to my work, every theoretical perspective on a phenomenon as complex as power will have points of difficulty or difference within it, and Gramscian hegemony has had many interpreters. However, my point is not to establish a recipe for the enquiry, but to show how my thinking has been shaped by what I see as a persuasive explanation for domination and subordination, and Gramscian hegemony seems peculiarly apt when applied to religion and schooling.

We can therefore identify hegemony where the existence of exploitation is either denied by the periphery or accepted as inevitable or legitimate so that radical dissent is either not articulated or its repression is also accepted as legitimate. There are clearly many societies in which such hegemony is at least partly realised, and especially in its pragmatic form of inevitability (JESSOP, 1972:127).

Drawing on Foucault

Some Foucaultian perspectives on power are also of use in this study, because of the focus on the processes of identity formation. Foucault viewed power, not as a 'possession' of a dominant class, but as strategy and process:

the effects of domination associated with power arise not from an appropriation and deployment by a subject but from manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings; and a relation of power does not constitute an obligation or prohibition imposed upon the 'powerless', rather it invests them, is transmitted by and through them (SMART, 1985:77).

Further, Foucault argued that where there is power there must also be resistance; that power depends for its existence on the presence of resistance.

What Foucault calls 'capillary power' – *power that reaches into individuals so deeply it makes them who they are* (ALFORD, 2000:125) - resonates with the analysis of power as hegemonic which I seek to employ.

In thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking... of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives (FOUCAULT, 1975:102).

Such a perspective on power stresses the way in which power proceeds from the 'bottom up' rather than from the 'top down'. Or as Alford expresses it *the way in which power migrates from the margins of society to the centre, like blood returning to the heart* (ALFORD, 2000:125). This conception of power as a process in which those over whom power seems to be exercised are complicit, almost agentic, in the 'giving' of power sits easily with Gramscian notions as outlined above. Further, the picture of the processes of power residing deep in the individual psyche, as almost embodied by individuals, resonates with understandings of the interconnectedness of body and society as expressed by Connell and Butler (see below). Such treatment of the role of the embodied individual in the production of power relationships is lacking in other theoretical perspectives on power, such as in Luke's three dimension of power (LUKES, 1974).

Use is also made throughout this study of the Foucaultian concept of 'discourse'. Understandings of the term and its uses are contested (CHALABY, 1996), but for the purposes of this study I regard discourse as a body of language-use that is unified by common assumptions, the implicit nature of which renders them powerful.

Discourses are evidenced by ideas, talk, silences and behaviors within any social field. They are the normalized ideas and practices, the said and the unsaid, that constitute our knowing (CAMMACK and KALMBACH PHILLIPS, 2002:124).

Discourses, whether they are linguistic or non-verbal, direct the ways in which people think and act, as our understanding of the social world is limited by the language we use to describe it: *Discourses make certain things sayable and doable, but others not* (ABERCROMBIE et al., 2000:99). Discourses are not necessarily confined to spoken words or texts but can extend to what Paechter & Weiner term the *concretization of power* in terms of its inscription in, for example, the use of

physical space in institutions (PAECHTER and WEINER, 1996). Thus discourses may be constituted, not just linguistically, but by the social conditions from which the discourse emerges (CHALABY, 1996).

Discourses, in turn, lead to discursive practices and discursive relations: that is, practices which are produced in association with the ideology and assumptions embedded in the discourse, and relations which proceed from the possibilities, and the closing off of possibilities, which attend such ideologies and assumptions.

If previous approaches have assumed women use language in certain ways because they are women, discourse analysis flips this and suggests that women are who they are because of language; that is, language is a tool of identity formation and is the identity marker (JULE, 2007:3).

Utilising the concept of discourse, therefore, as a structured framework within which people understand their world, allows us to better appreciate and explore the mechanisms through which the processes of domination are sustained. In the context of this study, the concept is useful for exploring the ways in which religious and professional identities are performed by women, as the very language they use to frame their narratives is shaped and formed by the socio-cultural practices of their communities. *Discourse creates community; it defines community; it reveals community (JULE, 2007:2).*

Theorising Gender

The most treacherous discourses are the ones we do not notice or think are not worth challenging; their 'innocence' adds to their power. (BURN, 2001:208)

....the language we use for gender both seduces and restricts us... we become caught in particular gender discourses that may have greater seductive force than explanatory usefulness (PAECHTER, 2006:253).

In patriarchal societies, power and gender are inextricably intertwined. The relations of gender are often, in practice, relations of power and vice versa. Yet defining gender is inherently complex and problematic because of the historically changing and politically fraught character of gender (CONNELL, 1995). Discourses in and

about education and religion tend to reproduce assumptions about the 'essentiality' of gender in such a way as to reduce related issues to common sense. The problem with such discourses is that they fail to acknowledge the complexity of gender. They appeal to what is supposedly obvious and needs no explanation. But they are grounded in an essentialism: the idea that a certain essence defines the centre of our identity as human beings, and as women and men. Masculinity and femininity, it is assumed, are the direct derivatives of maleness and femaleness. Since maleness and femaleness are regarded as biological absolutes, masculinity and femininity take on a 'natural' (or biological) significance.

Drawing on Connell

Connell argues that such biological reductionism is an inadequate response to the complexities of the social. He notes that *arguments about gender are plagued by an assumption that what is biological or 'natural' is somehow more real than what is social* (CONNELL, 1987:x). Grumet (GRUMET, 1988) further observes that while sexism appears to be 'social', gender is assumed to be 'natural', and what is 'natural' is assumed to be fixed.

Although there is considerable contestation about the 'givenness' of biological maleness and femaleness (BUTLER, 1990), many social theorists would agree that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed rather than biologically determined and therefore constantly shifting rather than fixed. Further, masculinity and femininity are understood to be about practices – crudely, gender is what we **do** rather than what we **are**, or as de Beauvoir coined it *one is not born, but rather one becomes, a woman* (de Beauvoir in POWELL, 2006:83). *When we speak of masculinity and femininity we are naming configurations of gender practice* (CONNELL, 1995:72). Any account, therefore, which seeks to explore the effects of such constructions, will problematise cultural and societal attitudes, expectations, power and control. Walkerdine defines femininity as that which is performed, a playing out of difference, often according to societal expectations.

If masculinity and femininity can both be seen as defences against the qualities held by the other, then there can be no natural division of the sexes,

but a complex order through which difference is held in play.
(WALKERDINE, 1989:276).

Connell, in *Gender and Power* (CONNELL, 1987), tests the primary frameworks for understanding the social phenomenon of gender. He examines extrinsic theories such as the notion that gender relations are the site of the reproduction of capitalism, but notes that *the subordination of women started long before capitalism, occurs in all classes under capitalism and has continued in countries which have ceased to be capitalist* (CONNELL, 1987:42). Further, he stresses that the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy is not simply functional (some patriarchal customs have been eroded for capitalist purposes), but is complex and contradictory.

He goes on to examine intrinsic theories such as role theory – an approach to social culture which locates its basic constraints in stereotyped interpersonal expectations. He concedes that sex-role theory is an attractive way of talking about gender because it allows a shift from biological assumptions to social expectations, which in turn offers the principle of a politics of reform through the possibility of altered societal expectations. Further, role theory connects social structure to the formation of personality and offers a simple framework – socialisation - for describing the insertion of individuals into social relations. For Connell, however, there are serious conceptual difficulties implied by sex-role theories. Role theory stresses the way in which people are trapped in stereo-types which are made effective by social reward and punishment. But it does not adequately explain what, other than sex difference, motivates individuals to maintain existing stereo-types.

In addition to this *dependence on biological dichotomy and its consequently non-social conception of structure* (CONNELL, 1987:53), Connell rejects sex-role theory as an adequate framework for analysing gender because it fails to theorise power, social interest and the historicity of gender and because it relies on a normative standard case. This emphasising of difference and playing down of power in the analysis of gender leads to a misrepresentation of resistance.

Connell then goes on to review and reject what he calls 'categorical theory', which identifies closely with oppositional politics (i.e. men as the natural enemy of women), focuses on the category as a unit (i.e. women) rather than on the processes by which the category is constituted, and pictures the social order in terms of a few major categories related to each other by power and conflict of interest. For Connell, its major presupposition - that women and men can be treated as internally undifferentiated general categories - implies that resistance to existing power relationships is pointless, since structure and categories are regarded as universal. Although categorical theory often stresses conflict of interest in a way that can lead to a politics of access (e.g. trying to raise the number of women in political leadership) it fails to generate reasons to question the social arrangements which create the inequalities in the first place. *In the final analysis, categoricism can recognise power but deletes from its analysis the element of practical politics: choice, doubt, strategy, planning, error and transformation* (CONNELL, 1987:61).

This problematic of conceptions of women (or men) as a homogenous category is one raised by feminists (BEASLEY, 1999), particularly in the context of post-modernism. Universalised and normalising accounts of women as a group (such as all women are different from, or the same as, men, or the same as each other, or have a unique voice) might, it is argued, lead to a feminism which itself becomes complicit in subordination, reproducing the very procedures of oppression which it hopes to undermine. The danger is that 'woman' could become the new oppressive universal standard against which some women are bound to be marginalised.

Connell advocates moving towards a more practice-based theory: one which focuses on what people do by way of constituting the social relations in which they live and one which pays attention to the structure of social relations as a condition of all practices. But he cautions that, while contesting a direct causal link between the physical and the social, we should not overlook the importance of the body in the process of producing the social:

The main reason that it has been difficult to grasp the historicity of gender relations is the persistent assumption that a transhistorical structure is built into gender by the sexual dichotomy of bodies. This is the assumption that

sex role theory finally falls back on and most kinds of categoricalism too. A social theory is pointless or at best peripheral if it is true that the basic determinants are biological. The relationship between the body and social practice is thus a crucial issue for the theory of gender. (CONNELL, 1987:64)

While I wish to reject biological essentialism when it comes to theorising gender, it can still be argued that gender, (and indeed the social in general), is inextricably bound up in bodies. Connell does not contest the 'facts' of reproductive biology, but challenges the assumption that the biological make-up of our bodies is the essence of the social relations of gender. He is not satisfied merely with the additive concept of nature and society (biology establishes a certain difference between human females and males while society culturally elaborates on these distinctions, for example in the gendering of clothing). Rather, he challenges the assumption that the social is necessarily derived from the physical, that physical qualities necessarily determine practice. He suggests instead that

practice issues from the human and social side of the transaction; it deals with the natural qualities of its objects, including the biological characteristics of bodies. It gives them a social determination. The connection between social and natural structures is one of practical relevance, not of causation (CONNELL, 1987:78).

This would appear to be in line with corporeal feminist thinking that

No aspect of the body is outside of social life and no line is drawn between biology and social practices because they are seen as inextricably intertwined; body and society are one (BEASLEY, 1999:80).

In his more recent book, *Masculinities*, Connell writes that

Masculinity.....is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture (CONNELL, 1995:71).

Connell argues, therefore, for a gender theory which eschews biological essentialism but recognises the centrality of the **socially constructed** body, a body on which cultural meanings are continuously inscribed. The body is not a 'biological base' prior to the social... Rather the embodiment of gender is from the start a social embodiment (CONNELL, 2000:59).

Connell builds on Gramsci's theory of hegemony to theorise masculinity and femininity and the power relations of gender. His theory of 'hegemonic masculinity' attempts to illustrate, not just the relationships between masculinities and femininities, but also the relations between different kinds of masculinity – *the relations of alliance, dominance and subordination* (CONNELL, 1995:37). Connell uses his term to refer to the most dominant form of masculinity (white, heterosexual, authoritarian and physically and emotionally strong) to which all other masculinities and all femininities are subordinate. Such a construction of masculinity becomes 'normative' – not necessarily the most prevalent form, but the form which enjoys society's endorsement and to which, consequently, all men are compelled to aspire. Central to this idea is the understanding that masculinities and femininities are constructed and negotiated in relation to others and in opposition to each other.

Rather than attempt to define masculinity as an object... we need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. Masculinity, to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture (CONNELL, 1995:71).

Such social practices make constant reference to bodies without reducing social practice to bodies.

Hegemonic masculinity thus confers considerable power, vis-à-vis women, not just on the hegemonically masculine but on all men, while at the same time standing as an ideal type against which various ways of 'doing man' can be constructed and performed (PAECHTER, 2006:255).

Connell argues that there is no equivalent 'feminine hegemony' as constructs of femininity do not carry cultural power in the same way. Instead, Paechter argues, femininities are *constructed as a variety of negations of the masculine... defined as lack, an absence of masculinity... a powerless position* (PAECHTER, 2006:256).

Illuminating also in terms of the interrelationship between gender and power is Connell's notion of 'the patriarchal dividend', the advantage enjoyed by men in general and won from the overall marginalisation of women. Bearing in mind his observation that what has been under threat in recent years is not patriarchy, but the legitimisation of it, he notes that

hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of the patriarchy which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (CONNELL, 1995:77).

Connell argues that all men, irrespective of the extent to which they achieve 'hegemonic masculinity', benefit from the marginalisation of women. Reaping the patriarchal dividend ensures that the social benefits of honour, prestige and authority associated with being male, alongside material and economic benefits, are universally distributed amongst men. The benefits, however, while universal, are not uniform. Rather, the gender relationships of dominance and subordination among men mean that benefits are distributed according to race, social class and sexuality.

So, in drawing on Connell, I am choosing to select approaches that emphasise gender-power relations as being developed and sustained through complex social processes. The regulation of those relations through discursive practices is further illuminated by the idea of 'performativity', and so I now turn to the work of Judith Butler.

Drawing on Butler

For the purposes of this study, I choose to understand gender as performative in Butler's sense (BUTLER, 1990). That is that certain 'regulative discourses' compel women and men to engage repeatedly in acts which are culturally associated with bodies encoded as 'woman' or 'man'. Butler stresses that it is in the repetition of these acts that the illusion of essential and coherent gender dualism is created (BUTLER, 1993).

What we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylisation of the body... what we take to be an 'internal' feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts (Butler in SALIH, 2004:94).

Butler goes further than Connell and directly challenges, not only 'naturalised' understandings of masculinity and femininity, but also the biological binaries of male and female, suggesting that the sexed body is itself socially or culturally constructed

and that sexual 'difference' is *created when it is restricted to certain body parts that are pronounced and identified at birth* (SALIH, 2004:22). She suggests that the assumed obviousness of biological difference as fact itself attests to how deeply the production of gender is concealed in discourse. She argues that we become our genders but that *there is no place outside gender which precedes this becoming* (SALIH, 2004:21) as sex is already gender. Gender may be 'chosen'

only from within the parameters of culturally available terms which always pre-exist the subject (SALIH, 2004:22).

To choose a gender is to interpret received gender norms in a way that reproduces and organises them anew. Less a radical act of creation, gender is a tacit project to renew a cultural history in one's own corporeal terms. This is not a prescriptive task we must endeavour to do, but one in which we have been endeavouring all along (Butler in SALIH, 2004:26).

The very freedom implied in 'choosing' gender becomes burdensome through social constraints because of the sense of dislocation which attends an ambiguous gender affinity in contemporary society. Butler describes the "vertigo of terror" occasioned when moments of gender dislocation cause the individual to sense that they are disrupting the social norms of place (SALIH, 2004:22). Such terror, she suggests, is caused by the *possibility of losing social sanction, of leaving a solid social station and place* (Butler in SALIH, 2004:27). Departure from conventional 'femininity' brings social penalties. For example, for a woman to admit any serious dissatisfaction with mothering is for her to admit her failure as a person (TONG, 1989). Yet, if we experience such 'terror' as women, this would seem to confirm the idea that gender identity is recognised by us as both chosen and unstable.

Drawing on de Beauvoir, Butler argues that women have been understood as embodied in particular ways. By identifying women generally with the body, masculine perspectives have distanced men from bodies. By 'othering' women, men have made themselves other than the body and thus have distanced themselves from the limitedness of embodiment. *From this belief that the body is Other, it is not a far leap to the conclusion that others (i.e. women) are their bodies, while the masculine 'I' is the noncorporeal soul* (Butler in SALIH, 2004:28). Challenging the mind/body dualism, and acknowledging that our experience of the social worlds is not abstract

but rather takes place in and through material bodies, allows us to take account of both the body's role in the production and reflection of social meanings, and its significance as the subject and object of power relations (MCGUIRE, 1990).

This conceptualisation of gender offered by theorists such as Connell and Butler – as a relational process produced through the complex interrelation of bodies and the social – seems useful for understanding the lived experience of the women in my study, and in particular the processes of marginalisation and silencing which appear to be at work. While in view of such socio-cultural constructions of gender, it is important to remember that 'women' as a category is a slippery concept, yet it seems that being in a female body in a gendered world brings common experiences (BONNER et al., 1992:2). Further, the emphasis in literature on the particularly embodied nature of Primary teaching as work renders obsolete any disembodied conceptualisation of women as social actors. At the same time, gender is always closely allied to constructions of the self. Gender is

something that is an internal understanding of oneself, a claimed identity... not biology or others' perceptions... and is related (in conformity or otherwise) to our bodies and how we experience them. Consequently, while my sense of how feminine I am, and the femininity or otherwise of my behaviour, change according to place and time, place and circumstances, my sense of myself as female does not (PAECHTER, 2006:259).

Theorising Religion

Having chosen to conceptualise gender and power as co-dependent social processes which are bound up in discourse, I turn now to consider the ways in which faith might usefully be understood. The phenomenon of religion does not lie outside such social processes. Indeed, as outlined above, notions of hegemony seem to find resonance in the social institutions of religion. However, hegemony relies heavily on notions of ideology, and, for me, the reduction of faith to the ideological is problematic. I turn now, therefore, to consider how a shared Christian identity might be utilised towards an understanding of the faith of participants as authentic, while acknowledging the institutions of religion as bound up in hegemonic processes of gender-power relations.

Christian identity as 'standpoint'

In 'common sense' thinking, and in much academic writing, faith and rationality are oppositionally constructed. Indeed, even for Thomas Aquinas, faith takes over where reason ends (MCGRATH, 1993). Yet Habermas calls for secular society to grant that *religious convictions have an epistemological status that is not purely and simply irrational* (HABERMAS and RATZINGER, 2005:51). He points to the need for the liberal state to *acquire a new understanding of religious convictions* and to recognise them as *something more and something other than mere relics of a past with which we are finished* (Schuller in HABERMAS and RATZINGER, 2005:12).

Alternative approaches to a study of this nature might wish to problematise faith at its point of origin, to ask by what processes of power wielded by the church establishment and embedded in patriarchal religious cultures do women come to a belief in a god at all, let alone the distinctive vision of God, the world and themselves that makes up belief systems such as those described in this text. This is not something which I can do with integrity. For me, these women are not the cultural 'other', far less the 'repugnant cultural other', which some modern discursive practices would render them (HARDING, 1991). Rather they are co-members of some of my own social groups, who have participated in the research with the implicit understanding that faith, at least to some degree, is held by us in common. I fully acknowledge that religious communities in general, and Scottish Presbyterianism in particular, are subject to the same processes of gender and power (and gendered power) as all aspects of human society are, however we may choose to understand these processes. But my own position in relation to my participants, and indeed in relation to Christian faith itself (or to the particular expression of that faith in Scottish Presbyterianism) is such that I cannot concede that such processes can fully and adequately explain the belief in God which is narrated by my participants. While I allow that their understanding of the divine is shaped and coloured by historical and cultural processes, I do not proceed on the presupposition that their sense of God is itself merely a product of these. In other words, I cannot extract from the equation the possibility of the actuality of God.

Neither, for the purposes of this thesis, do I proceed from a position of pre-suppositional theism. But it is neither possible nor appropriate within this text to rehearse the various ontological, cosmological or epistemological arguments for or against the existence of a deity. Even where such arguments are reviewed, it is commonly concluded (since Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804) that the existence of god is neither demonstrable nor refutable by such intellectual processes (HICK, 1983).

It might be enough to suggest that where God is 'imagined', such 'imagination' is powerful enough to account for the combination of cognitive, affective and behavioural practices (FREDDOSO, 2005) which constitute the faith of an individual, irrespective of whether or not such 'imagination' is justified. In other words, the spirituality of my respondents can be understood as 'consequentially real' (GANIEL and MITCHELL, 2006:15). But I feel that something more must be conceded. A notable absence in the texts concerning Scottish Presbyterianism to date is any study which simultaneously allows for the marginalising effects of gendered power as experienced by women and for the reality and integrity of their faith position. I wish to allow for both. I must acknowledge the possibility, therefore, that the sense of God narrated by my participants may be produced, not only through the processes of the social, but also through the 'reality' of divine self-disclosure (the ways in which God makes himself known). To do less would seem to me to mis-appropriate their lived experience, and to betray the trust implicit in our exchanges. And in doing this I hope to problematise apparatuses of thought in the extant literature (i.e. those which fail to acknowledge patriarchy and those which refuse to give credence to the authenticity of faith) challenging their representations and their constitutive powers and thus opening up spaces in which alternative understandings of women's participation in Presbyterianism might emerge.

In terms of my own positionality, therefore, I contend that, whether theist, atheist, or agnostic, all researchers take 'a view from somewhere', and so I choose to foreground my own Christian identity, and to locate myself on a continuum of faith which encompasses doubts, uncertainties and ambiguities as well as beliefs

(GANIEL and MITCHELL, 2006). In so doing I am aware that I open up the possibility of being cast as apologist rather than anthropologist (HOWELL, 2007b), engaged in hagiography rather than in ethnography (Parman in MACDONALD et al., 2004). But, with Howell, I would venture to suggest that Christianity in this context might usefully be understood as *a subject position analogous to other committed subject positions outside androcentric enlightenment modernity (e.g. feminism)* (HOWELL, 2007b:371) and I would challenge Parman's view that *an ethnographer is not a believer in anything except the capacity of humans to engage in belief* (Parman in MACDONALD et al., 2004:177). Insofar as I share the religious identities of my respondents (and these are by no means homogenous, but might also be understood as located on a continuum), this may enable particular insights. Indeed

the self/other dynamics of a shared religious identity... can lead to a particular understanding of the nature of Christian commitment as a kind of 'standpoint epistemology' analogous to others of gender, race, sexual orientation and so forth (HOWELL, 2007b:372).

Just as feminist-standpoint epistemology attempts to make women's experience rather than men's its point of departure, so might a Christian claim that her 'view from somewhere', albeit an ambiguous and uncertain somewhere, enriches and liberates the research endeavour.

This is not necessarily to privilege my status as an 'insider' or to suggest that useful research could not be undertaken by those without such 'native' identity. Indeed categories of 'insider' and 'outsider' are themselves socially constructed and therefore in constant flux and insider/outsider dichotomy cannot capture the complexity of multiple understandings and experiences (GANIEL and MITCHELL, 2006). Rather it is to use reflexively my personal connection to the identities and characteristics of my respondents in order to explore the very nature of such identities (HOWELL, 2007b). *Thus, the category of the 'native' has been transformed from a given identity to a heuristic device for problematizing static identities* (HOWELL, 2007b:374). Further, the Christian researcher can work within the discourses of religion, utilising theological categories, even those offensive to the secular researcher (like 'sin'), thus acknowledging them as integral components of

the subject's world, and in turn translating them into the language of social research in an attempt to achieve and share understanding.

Indeed, a liberal political culture can expect that the secularised citizens play their part in the endeavours to translate relevant contributions from the religious language into a language that is accessible to the public as a whole (HABERMAS and RATZINGER, 2005:51/52).

It may seem problematic to suggest that Christianity – emblematic as it is of the colonial endeavour – merits the attempts of researchers towards ‘decolonization’. Yet Howell argues that *anthropology and other social sciences have ‘colonized’ Christianity through a secularist mandate* (HOWELL, 2007b:375). For me, therefore, to write explicitly as a ‘native’ might serve to ‘decolonise’ and therefore reposition my respondents in productive ways. In adopting such an approach I attempt to position my respondents as

a cultural other whose exclusion enables and secures a hegemonic “modern” point of view... that... places them in the same conceptual and political space the vaunted margins – as women, gays, ethnic and racial minorities... (HARDING, 1991:392).

This location of Christians, particularly perhaps Evangelical Christians, as a marginalised group allows for ‘native’ researchers to see and understand their world in ways which challenge and contest the secular-normative view. This standpoint, along with a feminist standpoint epistemology, helps to situate my respondents within multiple systems of domination – as women, as Scots, as Scottish women, as unpromoted teachers, as unpromoted women teachers, as Christians and as Christian women.

What is faith?

So how then might I theorise the phenomenon referred to in this work as ‘faith’? The term ‘faith’ defies simple definition. This is partly because it is used to describe both the objects of faith and the sets of practices through which such objects are understood and related to (WEBSTER, 1993). On the one hand, to have faith might simply be to believe that God exists and has such and such a character (whether as described in the Bible, the Koran, or whichever religious text one chooses to

privilege). Yet, one of the New Testament writers points out that even God's enemies believe this: *You believe that there is one God; Good!: the demons also believe that, and shudder* (James 2:19 NIV). So, for some at least, faith clearly involves more than this. Freddoso describes Christian faith as *An intellectual act (and associated habit) that involves both cognitive and affective elements...* (FREDDOSO, 2005:174). It is about a perceived relationship of trust in and service of the divine. For such, faith is not merely about the 'whom' that their attitude is towards, but also about the nature of that attitude. In other words *religious identity is not merely defined by the cognitively drawn notion of 'belief', but more widely as 'commitment'* (HOWELL, 2007b:373). This is perhaps no better demonstrated than in the Old Testament narrative of Abraham whose terrible act of faith has become iconic in Judaic-Christian traditions. As Kierkegaard points out (KIERKEGAARD, 1985), it was not belief in the existence of God that was put to the test when Abraham raised his knife to his child. Rather what was tested was his confidence not only that God could, but that God would be inclined to restore his child to him and thus fulfil the prophecy that he would father a great nation. Constructing religious identity narrowly as 'belief', or assuming that a repertoire of assumed truths is the central category constituting the Christian subject, can result in an essentializing of faith which limits our understandings of the lives of Christians such as the women in this study (HOWELL, 2007b).

While 'belief' remains an important part of the lexicon of virtually all Christians, employing the term from outside the standpoint in which it has emerged risks... imposing an enlightenment rationality where an embodied, relational dynamic is at work (HOWELL, 2007b:280/281).

Commitment, on the other hand,

corresponds to the lived experience... in which 'belief' is expanded beyond the cognitive or intellectual sphere into the public realm in a way that validates and substantiates a claimed identity (HOWELL, 2007b:379).

The self-consciously committed religious stand-point, therefore

is not an inherently dogmatic subjectivity narrowly circumscribed by liberal secular categories, but displays the embodied, flexible and contingent aspects present in other positions (HOWELL, 2007b:373).

Within Reformed Protestantism, faith is not defined narrowly as belief, but often characterised as having three key elements – knowledge, assent and trust.

Knowledge is understood to be an essential prerequisite of faith. Believers will hold certain 'knowledge' with respect to their belief system (for example that God is transcendent, that God is the creator, or that God became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ). In Reformed theology, such knowledge is understood to be gained through revelation, both through 'General Revelation' (given through the creation and resulting in what Calvin understood as a sense of deity inscribed on every heart) and 'Special Revelation' (the texts of the Old and New Testaments).

The woman of faith will 'assent' to the 'reality' of that knowledge, adopting it as 'true' by a deliberate act of will (sometimes known as 'conversion'). Within the Reformed tradition, truth is not created nor even discovered through faith. Truth, rather, is given. But through knowledge of Revelation the believer is put in possession of it, and faith involves the acknowledgement of such knowledge as truth. Some would argue, however, that the process cannot be reduced to the linear in this way. Augustine's *Credo ut intellegam* – *I believe in order to understand* appears to disrupt the linear construction of knowledge, followed by assent, then trust. For Augustine, there can be no understanding without faith: faith itself is what seeks understanding.

Revelation can be received only by faith, and faith is evoked not by evidence or proofs, but by the truth itself. By the same token, certitude is the fruit of faith, not its prelude (MACLEOD 2006:275).

Such a construction rejects the dichotomy between faith and reason in favour of a reciprocal relationship.

Finally, under this paradigm, the woman of faith enters into what she understands as a relationship of trust. The Judaic-Christian concept of God is anthropomorphic, that is, the divine is understood to be a 'person' who relates with individuals in personal and familial ways, and in ways that respect the freedoms and responsibilities of human persons (HICK, 1983). The Reformed tradition laid emphasis on faith as *trustful confidence in the gospel* (WEBSTER, 1993:208) thus recovering the affective nature of faith lacking in scholastic definitions of pre-Reformation Catholicism. Further, the Reformed concept of faith privileges the notion of grace over meritorious human activity (WEBSTER, 1993). Such a concept of God allows

for a relationship which is reciprocal (although not symmetrical), in which the believer receives life, love, ultimately salvation, and, in tokenistic return, gives trust, allegiance and worship.

For the Reformers, then, 'faith' is correlative to a series of prior affirmations about God's saving relationship to humanity, and humanity's contingent status as a recipient of grace (WEBSTER, 1993:208).

Rationalist philosophy since the Enlightenment has of course undermined this understanding of faith, challenging, in particular, notions of 'revelation' and characterising faith as 'blind' and irrational. Thus Christian faith

loses much of its cogency under pressure from an impersonal definition of the divine, an affirmation of the sole competence of human reason and an anthropology ill at ease with notions of human creatureliness (WEBSTER, 1993:209).

Indeed, the idea of the sole competence of human reason is precisely what is challenged in Postmodernism. Thus emerged the dualisms with which modernity's view of faith is imbued: real and supernatural, literal and critical, backward and progressive, bigoted and tolerant (HARDING, 1991). The response of the post-Enlightenment Christian tradition was to locate faith in the 'moral sense', and in the natural orientation of humanity to God, drawing on a *metaphysics of human restlessness in the face of finitude* (WEBSTER, 1993:209). Christians have had to accept processes of accommodation into the conditions produced by the secularisation of knowledge and the 'neutralisation' of the state (HABERMAS and RATZINGER, 2005). Yet Christianity is holding its own, often succeeding (as this study will suggest) in creating and maintaining cultural spaces which shelter it from the *corrosive forces of modernity* (GALLAGHER, 2003:9). And Christianity is not alone among religious persuasions in resisting extinction. Bloch argues that

religion as both debate and way of life has not crumbled in the face of an apparently inexorable rationalist, scientific, modernising Enlightenment and the globalisation of the market economy, but retains a potency and strength which remains far in excess of its ability to explain (THOMSON, 2009:ix).

More recent scholarship problematises the status of religion in post-modernity by challenging the very categories of 'religious' and 'secular' (although this dichotomy was often challenged by Calvin himself), pointing to the ways in which such categories are used in strategic ways to essentialise (and sometimes to marginalise)

faiths by the assumed separation from the non-religious secular. *There is an argument for saying that terms such as religion, secular, politics, economics and even society are mutually parasitic, ideological modern rhetorical constructs* (BARCLAY, 2009:1). But Calvinism has long regarded faith as transcending the rational and the philosophical:

Calvinism understood that the world was not to be saved by ethical philosophizing, but only by the restoration of tenderness of conscience. Therefore it did not indulge in reasoning, but appealed directly to the soul, and place it face to face with the Living God (KUYPER, 1931:76).

Given the differing religious identities of my respondents, and the ways that these are negotiated and in turn located along a continuum of faith, an historic treatment of the phenomenon of faith such as the Reformed Protestant version offered above, may seem problematic, particularly as it neglects to engage with the partial and the contextualised nature of faith in practice. Indeed, even allowing for 'faith' as authentic and as comprising some 'supernatural' element with which sociology has not the capacity to deal, I fully acknowledge that the lived experience of faith in religious communities is contingent on the various outworkings of gender, power and discourse as described earlier in this chapter. In other words, faith must be understood as cultural rather than conceptualised primarily in terms of doctrine and theology (GALLAGHER, 2003). Yet by utilising the historically sanctioned understanding of Christian faith within the Reformed tradition on which Scottish Presbyterianism is founded, I attempt to take seriously the convictions and values of the women in my study. To do otherwise would be to dismiss their viewpoint as a form of 'false consciousness'.

Conclusion

The inter-related nature of the social relations of gender and power in the worlds of education and religion in Scotland is complex. A variety of theoretical tools might usefully have been deployed in the pursuit of deeper knowledge of such social intricacy. What was decisive in my selection was that these complex socio-political worlds cannot be disentangled from the subjectively experienced lives of the women

whose worlds they are. The theoretical perspectives on which I have drawn are chosen to illuminate the individual agency of the participant in relation to the social structures within which she operates, while allowing for the fluid, transitory, ambiguous and contested nature of these structures and of her relationship with them.

My decision to adopt such a framework for conceptualising the social world, and for exploring the perceived problem of the silencing and marginalisation of women within school and church, inevitably shaped choices about the nature of the investigative process. Clearly, some research traditions would be unsuited to an exploration of social worlds which are textured in the ways I suggest: worlds marked by *the ephemeral, the indefinite and the irregular* (LAW, 2004:4). The construction of meanings which I endeavour to produce reflects not a coherent, compliant and structured reality which can be accurately mapped with a methodological toolkit. Rather it flows from *a sense of the world as an unformed but generative flux of forces and relations that work to produce particular realities* (LAW, 2004:7). In the next chapter, therefore, I set out my chosen methodology and offer a rationale for the investigative processes which I adopt.

CHAPTER THREE

LIVES AS STORIES: THE USE OF LIFE HISTORY METHODOLOGY

This section outlines my chosen methodology and the rationale for the choices I made. I understand methodology within the social sciences not as a technical entity, but rather as a way of addressing complex ontological issues of the kind outlined in the previous chapter. A principle of choice in methodology is that it be contingent on the theoretical concepts employed. My choices, therefore, are designed to reflect my theoretical orientation towards process and complexity in the social worlds with which the study deals. I attempt to employ an approach which resonates with my engagement with the ideological and with hegemonic processes of power and of gender-power relations, and which allows for the polysemy of coercion and consent, and of structure and agency. Further, I seek a methodology which acknowledges the processes of knowledge-production in reflexive ways which accommodate my own positionality as outlined in the introduction.

Qualitative Research And Life-History Methodology

The Qualitative Paradigm

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry used across a range of subjects. Broadly speaking, qualitative research seeks to explore the *why* and *how* of human action using samples which are 'information rich' rather than representative (PLUMMER, 2001:9). Within this paradigm, it is increasingly acknowledged that the role of the researcher is crucial. Researchers reflect on the impact of their own involvement on the data gathered, and on the processes of analysis, and present their conclusions 'reflexively', that is having regard to their own subjective involvement in research processes. They acknowledge that the social world is an interpreted world and that different interpreters who have had different life experiences are likely to make

different interpretations which will result in the description of different realities (GOODSON and SIKES, 2001). Qualitative researchers also pay particular heed to the specificity of the contexts in which the data are gathered, and to the specificity of the participants in the research. For, as Alfred Schutz pointed out,

it is impossible to understand human conduct while ignoring its intentions, and it is impossible to understand human intention while ignoring the settings in which they take place (in CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:3/4).

The nature of interpretation within the qualitative paradigm is therefore partial, contingent and contextualised.

Life History Methodology

From within the broad paradigm of qualitative research methodologies has emerged the method of 'Life History' or 'narrative' research. Its origin can be traced to the endeavour to give voice to marginalised peoples by representing previously hidden histories. Although it was in use as early as the 1920s (DENZIN, 1989), it came into wide acceptance as a method in the social sciences only in the 70s, strongly influenced by the recent translation into English of Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of Folktale* (originally 1928, English translations 1958 and 1968). While its roots can be traced back to the hermeneutics of sacred texts, its more recent antecedents are the traditions of Russian formalism, US new criticism, French Structuralism, and German hermeneutics (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). What these latter traditions had in common was an interest in exploring texts themselves, rather than in discerning the author's intentions. Beginning in literary theory, this interest spread to the humanities and social sciences. An interpretive approach which understood that social worlds and human experiences can be read as social texts, *that is as structures of representation that require symbolic statement* (DENZIN, 1989:9) was central. Such an approach acknowledges the ways in which participants are produced and reproduced through discourse and discursive practices.

One of the defining characteristics of Life History Methodology as it has been used in recent years is the centrality of stories or narratives as a legitimate way of 'knowing'. This is partly because it is believed that stories are particularly suited as

the linguistic form in which lived human experience can be expressed (POLKINGHORNE, 1995). But it is more than this. Central to the theory behind narrative research is the notion that lives can usefully be thought of as enacted narratives (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). Indeed it is argued that lives are narratives, or have to be understood in that way in order to be understood at all. The data generated, rather than being typical or classifiable, are rather creative, accurate yet imaginative, *truthful fictions*.

Another defining characteristic of narrative research is the way in which it privileges the individual agency of the participant. Plummer points to the irony of the fact that narrative is often linked to the post-modern turn (PLUMMER, 2001). Post-modernism, he argues, is anti-humanist. Foucault, in this interpretation, pronounces the end of the human subject, whereas the human subject is the central concern of Life History methodology. This points to a central problem in sociological research, namely the tension between *the subjectively creative individual human being acting upon the world, and the objectively given social structure constraining him or her* (PLUMMER, 2001:4). Life History methodology problematises the primacy of structure over agency in the lives of individuals by exploring the interactive relationship between an individual's life experiences, the social contexts in which she is situated (politically, economically, religiously, geographically) and the processes through which she makes sense of her social worlds and negotiates her identities within them. Life History methodology privileges the subjectivity of the participant by keeping the subject 'alive' throughout the process of research enabling her voice to be heard (although notions of 'voice' are ambiguous and problematic, as I note below). By setting individuals as active participants in social life, and exploring their individual agentic actions, it allows for understandings of both human agency and collective control in the lives of research participants. Further, this privileging of subjectivity (or of subjectivities, if one understands the sense of self to be non-unitary (BLOOM, 1995)) highlights the ways in which participants are produced through discourse. The self becomes *more verb than noun, more process than entity, emergent at any moment in language, discourse, ideology* (Smith in BLOOM, 1995:101). The self is continuously being constituted and reconstituted in discourse,

and this permeates the processes of story-telling and narrative construction, both spoken and written.

While such a methodology does not presuppose, therefore, that lives are determined by structures, it does facilitate an understanding of narratives as constructed **in relation to** power dynamics in the various social worlds it explores. If, as Czarniawska suggests, power is about *institutions concoct(ing) narratives for others without including them in the conversations* (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:5), Life History allows for an unpacking of these processes. It also allows researchers to explore ways in which ideological processes such as those of hegemonic power distort social relations which in turn inform narrative accounts. Further, I understand agency to be not merely cognitive, but also *emotive and embodied* (LAW, 2004:3). Indeed Butlerian understandings of the processes of gender suggest that bodies are produced as the effects of power relations, and therefore come to bear cultural meanings which are produced through systems of power. I want to use a methodology which can cope with such complexity.

A further defining characteristic of narrative research is the acknowledgement of the research process – and the stories themselves – as conscious constructions, and the utilisation of the constructed nature of narrative to create meaning.

When someone tells their story as part of a life history research project they are involved in a creative act, irrespective of how committed they are to telling the 'truth', or telling it as it was. (GOODSON and SIKES, 2001:48).

The participants in effect are telling the story of their lives, or the version of that story that they want to tell. The story is already filtered through their own processes of interpretation and re-presentation and represents a partial and selective commentary on their lived experience. In a sense, the story is a creative act, or speech act. There may be a variety of reasons for the version an individual chooses to tell - the way she 'plots' her life (POLKINGHORNE, 1995). It may be the one that, for her, makes the most sense, or that brings coherence to her lived experience. It may be the version that she thinks the researcher expects to hear – thus shaped by the audience, or possibly one which seeks to find recognition with the audience as an individual or as a group. The participant may not hear questions or comments

through the same meaning-frame as the researcher or the other participants (HOLLWAY and JEFFERSON, 2000). Her story will reflect the fact that she is invested in particular positions in discourse, and her telling will be, perhaps unconsciously, shaped by her need to protect vulnerable aspects of herself (HOLLWAY and JEFFERSON, 2000). This methodology recognises stories as social acts, not only points of identity-construction through self-narration, but also points of public negotiation between self and others. *In this way language becomes the product of the reciprocal relationship between the speaker and listener and their social world* (KEHILY, 1995:26). The stories which are co-produced are acknowledged to owe as much to the social context of their utterance and to the socio-ideological structure of the human exchange, as to the narrator's desire to 'tell it like it is': *Narrative and self-narration, then, is more than the product of the individual writer or speaker; it is a highly constructed performance...specially selected for a particular audience* (KEHILY, 1995:28). Further, the stories are discursive; that is to say, they are produced in and through the discourses at play in the various social worlds. The narratives are therefore shaped by the linguistic possibilities within the communities they explore; discourses both create and reflect our lived experience (JULE, 2007).

Using Life Histories In The Context Of This Study

The tradition of Life History or Narrative research has, therefore, evolved from one which sought to make visible previously marginalised lives to one which consciously privileges inter-subjectivity and reflexivity, self-consciously suggesting that life stories are composed, fabricated and messy. It is also a tradition which encompasses a repertoire of different approaches to, and uses of, the stories of lives, from using stories to chart a biography of an individual, through collecting stories to search for broad social patterns, to constructing stories to explore a perceived problem. In this section I discuss why this methodology seemed desirable and well-matched for use in my study. I then go on to outline my own approach to the method, and the particular ways in which I understand the data collected and interpreted to offer answers to issues posed.

A sense of match

Life stories express our sense of self: who we are and how we got that way. (LINDE, 1993:3). The main phenomenon under exploration in my study is how Presbyterian women teachers in Scotland understand their social worlds and how they position themselves within these. More specifically, I seek to unravel the problem of the apparent conformity, and the resulting marginalisation and ‘silencing’ of women in the structures of school and church, and to explore their seeming collusion in these processes. Thus, I attempt to explore the relationship between meaningful individual lived experiences and the cultural and meaning-making institutions of education and religion. Given the complexities of the social relations of gender, and the processes of gender and power which give rise to particular cultural practices in schools as workplaces, and in churches as spaces in which to practise faith, the holistic perspective offered by Life History method seemed appropriate for this study and allowed access to the minutiae of women’s lives in a way which may have been problematic with other forms of enquiry. It combines the personal and the professional, matching up the creativity and personal character of the woman as an individual with the collective constraint and control of her workplace and of her place of worship (ERBEN, 1996), and allows for an exploration of the ways in which these combine to produce particular performances of professionalism and of femininity. Thus, in my selection of method, *a preoccupation with...the validity, reliability, generalizability and theoretical relevance of the biographical method must be set aside in favour of a concern with meaning and interpretation* (DENZIN, 1989:25). And such a methodology lends itself to interpreting participants’ stories as produced through discourses and shaped by hegemonic processes of gender-power relations.

Life History methodology also seemed suited to the nature and characteristics of my study in a number of additional ways.

First, Goodsoon & Sikes (GOODSON and SIKES, 2001) argue that this method of enquiry is particularly useful in the study of teachers. They see teaching as an

intensely personal, interactive, relationship-based activity which cannot be understood without knowing about the person the teacher is. Thus such a study of teacher action is one which requires a methodology which takes account of the connectedness of life. Life History approach recognises that lives are not compartmentalised - an individual's wider life experiences have a bearing on their professional life and vice versa. Life Histories, existing as they do *in the ambiguous, intersecting location between the personal and the professional* (GOODSON and SIKES, 2001:61) provide a uniquely suitable methodology. Further, Czarniawska notes that professional practitioners are often *quite lonely in their thoughts* (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:48), as expressing their thinking in the workplace has practical and political consequences. Narrative interviews provided the opportunity for them to talk about their lives as teachers without such consequences.

Secondly, Life History methodology is also suited to an exploration of identities and identity-formation. Identity, it is argued, is about story telling, and story telling is a process of identity negotiation (KEHILY, 1995). Self-narrative, then, is a form of identity construction (KEHILY, 1995). *'Every account is a manifestation of the underlying negotiation of identities'* (Scott & Lyman (1968) in CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:54). Story-telling does not only facilitate our identity negotiations as individuals. Stories are also used to claim group membership and to establish and legitimate our right to belong (LINDE, 1993). This method, therefore, facilitates the investigation of how the self-consciousness of women is utilised to produce their self-formation as individuals and as members of professional and religious groups (ERBEN, 1996). Further Life History technique is peculiarly suited to discovering confusion and ambiguity where other methods in social science may tend to impose order and consistency. It renders more visible the *processes* of which social science so often speaks (PLUMMER, 2001). For example, consideration of the complex entities which make up any Primary staff group renders problematic any expectation of collective action towards, say, resistance. This must be balanced, however, by noting that aspects of our identities extend beyond us as individuals to us as groups – the collective self. And, even where there may be considerable dissonance within a social group,

there will be a modicum of agreement; at the very least, there will be a feeling among the members that they do share a modicum of agreement... however little members may actually share with each other, it must be more than they share with members of, what they recognise as, other groups (COHEN, 1994:17).

Further, interpretive Life History methodology can allow the researcher to explore the ways in which the subjectivities of the participants are shaped through particular ideologies and practices. For example, processes of gender and power such as those outlined in the previous chapter, may produce particular gendered performances of identity in which women participants repeatedly engage in acts associated with bodies encoded as 'woman' (BUTLER, 1993). By exploring the parameters of the discursive practices and linguistic terms which are culturally available to the participants within the social worlds of religion and schooling, such an interpretive methodology allows for an analysis which can attempt to unpack the ways in which the production of gender is concealed in, and perpetuated through, discourse.

Thirdly, this methodology finds favour with feminist researchers. It has been suggested that, for women, gender is an over-determining factor in shaping our Life Histories (KEHILY, 1995). In our self-narrations as women, Kehily argues, we privilege gender identity over other identities by reading events, decisions and turning points in our lives through the framework of gender. This seems to render it essential to consider the lives of teachers and of people of faith in the context of their lives as women, and to avoid the pitfall of that 'fracturing of women's experience' (Graham (1984) in KEHILY, 1995) for which feminist writers criticise some conventional research methods. Narrative methodology can offer an alternative to constructions of reality which position men's experiences as normative, by exploring the constructions of gendered self-identities within given social contexts. Further, Life History narratives

demonstrate how women negotiate their "exceptional" gender status in their daily lives; and they make possible the examination of the links between the evolution of subjectivity and the development of female identity (BLOOM, 1995:100).

The Particular Use Of The Method

In the context of my research, then, what is a narrative? According to Denzin, a *life* has two elements: a person, that is a conscious being, and her conscious experience. *The consciousness of the person is simultaneously directed to an inner world of thought and experience and an outer world of events and experience* (DENZIN, 1989:28). The hall-mark of biographical method, he argues, is the inscribing of these two structures of experience in a personal document. Taking a life or a lived experience to be the (assumedly intentional) social actions of a human being within a given social setting, and among other social actors, lives and texts can be understood to be co-constitutive – action equals text and vice versa (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). That is because lives and texts share key constitutive features. Actions, like texts, become objectified by being recorded. Both have relevance beyond the immediate context in which they are inscribed and both can be read (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). Further because *people spend their lives planning, commenting upon and justifying what they and others do* (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:4) accountability is central to understanding social action, and that accountability is played out in narrative form in conversational scripts. In order to understand our own lives and those of others we put them into narrative form. This is how we make meaning out of the social actions which constitute our agentic lives and those of others. Although we are the authors of our own narratives, we narrate them within the constraints imposed by the other social actors around us. *In every conversation a positioning takes place... which is accepted, rejected, or improved upon by the partners in the conversation* (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:5). Narrative is then a device for making sense of human action which is used, not first and foremost by qualitative researchers, but in our everyday interactions with others. So a narrative, in the context of my study, is a lived life told, interpreted, and retold:

a life lived is what actually happens. A life experienced consists of the images, feelings, sentiments, desires and meaning known to the person whose life it is...A life as told, a life history, is a narrative, influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by the social context (Bruner in DENZIN, 1989:30).

How should the narratives be understood?

My use of narrative in this study is not, then, what Polkinghorne calls a paradigmatic-type narrative enquiry in which stories are used to produce categories into which data are arranged. Rather, this work should be understood as using narrative-type narrative enquiry in which the data are used to produce explanatory stories (POLKINGHORNE, 1995). In Polkinghorne's sense, what I am engaged in is narrative analysis as opposed to analysis of narratives. That is not to say that the process is not analytical, but that the narrative is itself an analytical tool. In the particular context of my study, I offer the following framework for understanding the approach and offering pointers to the way in which the narratives should be read.

As Stories Which Are Researched/Solicited

First, the stories I have gleaned from my participants must be understood as solicited rather than naturalistic (PLUMMER, 2001). That is, they are stories told in response to my questions in research-interview settings and they are stories that would not otherwise be told. The participant's story *does not exist as a story independent of its telling* (DENZIN, 1989:43). It should be noted, however, that while the construction of stories through interviews has perhaps the least claim to produce 'naturalistic' stories,

*the telling of life stories is **always** socially constructed... and depends upon a flow of joint actions circulating between tellers, coaxers, texts, readers and the contexts in which the stories are told* (PLUMMER, 2001:43).

As Stories Which Are Topical And Meaning-Making

Secondly, the stories should be understood as topical. They purport to grasp, not a life or lives for their own sake, but rather to grasp elements of the lives of the participants in order to shed light on a topic under investigation – namely the apparent marginalisation and silencing of women in church and school, and their seeming consent within these processes. Although I hope in some limited and inevitably distorted way to give 'voice' to my participants, the main thrust of my endeavour is not to provide a faithful recording of life events as narrated to me, but

rather to make meaning from the narration of participants, and to use those lives as narrated to probe and explore the central problems. While I attempt to be faithful to the accounts as constructed in the interviews, my reconstruction of these accounts offers critical commentary which seeks to contextualise the individual's subjective lived experience within the broader canvasses of the socio-political landscape.

As Stories Which Are Both Individual And Collective

Thirdly, they should be understood as stories which are simultaneously individual and collective. The weaving together of stories in Life History presents us with an interesting dichotomy. There is a sense in which a personal story can be the story of a whole people; the individual tale becomes a collective tale (PLUMMER, 2001). Yet, part of the power of narrative is its ability to present many interesting paradoxes (JALANGO, 1995). While the stories are presented initially as individual narratives, each with her own chapter-section, the analytical chapter (Chapter 7) weaves the six narratives together in order to interrogate the problems more directly. When woven together, stories tell of the commonality of lived experience. And yet this juxtaposing of stories also brings out what results when different visions of the social worlds of home, school and church confront us (PLUMMER, 2001). While each story remains individually valid, (and it is necessary to retain the individuality of the stories in order to narrate the diversity of lived experience) it is in the bringing together of the diversities and commonalities of lived experience that I have endeavoured to make meaning and suggest answers.

As Stories Which Are 'Emplotted'

Fourthly, the stories should be understood as 'emplotted'. Indeed the stories I have gathered from the participants and which I present in this study have undergone several layers of emplotment. The plot is the means by which multiple events are brought together into a coherent story, *a conceptual scheme by which a contextual meaning of individual events can be displayed* (POLKINGHORNE, 1995:7). The plot is constructed first by the participant when she tells the stories of her experience

in the interview. In a sense this plot is co-constructed in that her narrative is shaped and constrained by my questions and responses during the interview process. I then select elements of her story to emplot into the narrative version of her lived experience which I present in this study: first as an individual tale, and later in juxtaposition with the stories of others. Since *plot is the narrative structure through which people understand and describe the relationship among the events and choices of their lives* (POLKINGHORNE, 1995:7), in this construction I use temporal ordering to suggest a hypothetical connection between events and actions (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). Whilst causality may be inferred from the plot I construct, the nature of the relationship between events is left open. My interpretations are not falsifiable because they do not purport to be 'true' or 'real'. Rather the narratives remain open to alternative readings and other interpretations. Such an approach contradicts the dichotomy between knowing and feeling (JALANGO, 1995). In this manner, I attempt to *find ways of knowing the indistinct and the slippery without trying to grasp and hold them tight. Here knowing... become(s) possible through techniques of deliberate imprecision* (LAW, 2004:3). In a sense the tentative explanations offered are 'exhibited' rather than demonstrated (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). That is, by placing certain elements of narrated actions close to one another, a particular sense is suggested, exhibiting a possible explanation as opposed to demonstrating a finding. *The power of the story does not depend on its connection to the world outside the story, but on its openness for negotiating meaning* (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:9).

As Stories Reflexively And Subjectively Constructed

The consciousness of the researcher is always implicated in the analysis of the text. Indeed, Cohen (1994) posits that the most valuable tool the researcher can bring to the collection and analysis of research narratives is his or her own experience and consciousness – that the starting point for our interpretation of the lives or selfhoods of others is our interpretation of our own. Similarly Holloway & Jefferson (2000) suggest that the research subject cannot be known except through another subject – the researcher. At the very least, our self-consciousness, and the use of this as a

paradigm, should stimulate our sensitivity to the self-consciousness of those we study. Through self-reflection we may surmise the ways in which the inner worlds of the subjects allow them to experience their outer worlds. Cohen commends the explicit interjection into research texts of the consciousness of the researcher:

We must address the question of the self since not to do so is to risk misunderstanding, and therefore misrepresenting, the people who we claim to know and we who represent to others (COHEN, 1994:4).

He does not argue that we are all the same, or that we use the same frameworks of meaning-making; yet he argues that if assumptions of sameness are questionable, then so are assumptions of difference. To insist that we cannot utilise our own self-consciousness in the understanding of others has tended to result in denying *to cultural others the self consciousness which we so value in ourselves* (COHEN, 1994:5). Further, he argues that if we fail to be concerned with the self, we then treat others as socially or culturally driven, thus ignoring the self-driven aspects of their behaviour and their capacity for self-conscious reflection. When we allow for individual self-hoods, on the other hand, we cannot view collective behaviour as merely mechanical but must allow for the possibility that the meaning a decision has for an individual may be different from its perception by others.

All of this is to say, fifthly, that the narratives should be understood as stories which are reflexively and subjectively constructed by the researcher. When designing this research originally, I was keen to capitalise on the symmetry which I envisaged in the social identities of my participants and myself. I had hoped to share both personal and professional discourses with participants as colleagues, as Scottish women, and as women of faith, and felt that such an exchange would seem 'natural'. In the event, my own altered work-circumstances (a move from Primary classroom teaching to employment in Higher Education) rendered this slightly problematic insofar as it affected their perceptions of me as a teacher. Given the uncertain relationship between teachers and teacher-educators in Scotland, there were points when I felt that participants responded in what Holloway & Jefferson (2000) refer to as a 'defended' way. But, on the whole, the intimate nature of the interactions in Life History research, and the great deal of commonality of experience we shared, meant that there developed a reciprocity between myself and the participants in which I also

shared my own experiences and such reciprocity is regarded as good practice in feminist research (GOODSON and SIKES, 2001). There is a sense in which this research has an autobiographical or auto-ethnographic element, since the social worlds under exploration are my own (some past, others current), and the problems under scrutiny are those I have observed in my own life and in the lives of women close to me. As an auto-ethnographer, I recognise that knowledges are bound up in standpoints. I acknowledge my relationship with what I 'know' and the sense in which the process of knowing it brings it into being (LAW, 2004). In the completed written narratives, therefore, I adopt a 'visible signature' (Geertz in CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). That is to say that in the texts of participants' narratives I am overtly present as the author and interpreter. Rather than attempting a *deletion of subjectivity* (LAW, 2004:36) in which *there is an out-there-ness that is... assumed to be independent of and prior, anterior, to our scientific attempts to know it* (LAW, 2004:37), I acknowledge that the version of 'reality' I offer is one constructed by and contingent on my own understandings and perspectives.

Notions of self-consciousness, of course, beg the question of the extent to which the respondents are self-conscious – do they know who they are and what makes them function – the transparent-self problem (HOLLWAY and JEFFERSON, 2000): and if so are they able or willing to 'tell' this. It also raises the problem of our 'right' to interpret their stories. Who are we to know better than the participants what their stories 'mean'? Even supposing we were to assume that the researcher has analytical insights not open to participants, should we assume that participants ought to accept our insights rather than formulate explanations of their own? In this sense, Life History research raises questions of ethics and power. The interviews are by no means covert but have the full and informed consent of the participants. Yet while it is often claimed that Life History research can be emancipatory and empowering for the participant, providing, as it does, an opportunity for her to reflect on her life experiences and render them coherent, that is not my ultimate aim. Since her story is open to re-interpretation it may be represented in a way that does not reflect the intended meaning of the participant. Notwithstanding my intersubjective interpretation of her stories through the paradigm of my own self-consciousness, I

have attempted to be aware of the danger of projecting my own experiences and perspectives onto the story of the participant. While acknowledging such issues of interpretation as a kind of researcher-power, I stress that I receive and respect the stories as narrated by participants. I further stress that I 'read' these narratives in relation to my own experience and self-construction, making apparent the interpreted nature of my treatment of them and my use of them to focus on particular problems. Ultimately, the reader is free to make his or her own alternative interpretations.

As Stories Which Are Interpretive

This brings me on, finally, to the interpretive nature of this investigative process. The narratives should be understood as interpretive: stories which I have 'created' drawing on literary traditions to inscribe the lives of the women whose stories I tell. Interpretive approaches place less emphasis on traditional norms of objectivity (such as validity, reliability, truth, falsity, and generalizability), instead regarding biographical materials from within a literary, 'fictional' framework (DENZIN, 1989). Through the intersubjective emotional process of interpretation, I attempt to create the conditions for shared understanding. I am dealing then with an interpretation of stories which is not deterministic but allows for the individual self-conscious meaning-making of both participant and researcher. The stories, therefore, bring with them a sense of awareness of their own construction, self-consciously suggesting that the story-telling is itself fabrication - an act of speech in which the gatherer and reader are as much implicated as the teller (PLUMMER, 2001). The data, therefore, comprise, not complete holistic life stories, but rather short life stories which explore aspects of the lived experience of the participant. In this sense, the process of interpretation begins, not when I sit down to analyse the transcripts, but rather, the very act of collecting the stories is itself interpretive.

I am dealing with knowledge gained subjectively (that is through the personal experience of myself and others) and intersubjectively (that is through the shared experiences of myself and others) and then re-interpreted. It is not merely in the re-representation of narratives that interpretation takes place. Rather, the whole process

of story-telling, story gathering and story writing is itself interpretive. I cannot portray the 'real' teacher or the real woman of faith, because she is inevitably recreated in the text. It is at best a truthful fiction: a story which endeavours to be faithful to facts and facticities (i.e. how facts are lived and experienced by participants) (DENZIN, 1989). This process of contextualisation and re-presentation to which the Life Historian subjects the life story produces only one of many possible interpretations of the lived experience of the participant, but it allows the researcher to explore the processes through which the story is produced.

Rather than attempting to make un-realistic claims for representing 'reality', life historians should simply acknowledge what they are able to do with the stories they use as data: namely, offer an interpretation through their writing and spell out the influences that may have coloured both the teller's story and their interpretation of it (GOODSON and SIKES, 2001:48).

None of this is to suggest that there is no 'real' or 'true' story about the life of a participant. Indeed, all stories told will refer to prior realities. Rather it cautions that such truths cannot be 'known', far less recounted, by either researcher or participant. In the *narrative arrangements of reality* (Elbaz in DENZIN, 1989:24) offered, the dividing line between fact and fiction is indistinct. For, as Czarniawska points out, the line between story-collecting and story-making, if it exists at all, is a very fine one (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004).

Research 'Design'

Having set out a rationale for the chosen methodology, and outlined its specific use in this context, this section takes a closer look at the sequences of the research process in my study.

Selecting the participants

The participants for the study were chosen in a purposive way. The women were, in some cases, personal acquaintances, and in other cases people with whom I was put in touch by friends, family or colleagues. Using such contacts ensured finding

women willing to participate in a study which meant giving up a considerable amount of personal time, as there was an implicit element of 'doing a favour for a friend' involved. Originally, I wanted to work with women who were unpromoted primary teachers and who identified as Scottish. Although I initially interviewed 8 women, only 6 are used in the completed study. One was set aside when faith became a serious element in the study as she did not share this marker of identity. The other, a woman whose faith was practised within the Scottish Brethren movement, withdrew from the study due to ill health. As discussed above, insofar as I share their identities as Scottish women, as teachers and as women of faith, this allowed for reciprocity in the interview exchanges and for using my own experiences and consciousness as an interpretive tool in the analysis of the co-produced narratives (COHEN, 1994). When a participant is already known personally to the researcher, it is possible that they may be more cautious about what they reveal: *telling a story to a friend is a risky business; the better the friend, the riskier the business* (Grumet in GOODSON and SIKES, 2001:25). On the other hand, respondents from shared socio-cultural backgrounds made frequent references within given frameworks of understanding and narrated their experiences to me in a way which would not have been possible had these social worlds not been experienced in common. Since the participants were either personally known to me, therefore, or drawn from the same set of socio-structural relations, there was the opportunity of sharing not only professional, but also other social discourses.

Gathering the narratives

At a practical level, what did I do and say to facilitate the production of these narratives, to provoke (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004) the kind of story-telling which facilitates the discovery and recovery of self in the women in the study?

It was essential to construct our meetings together as social exchanges rather than as interviews in which the respondent answered a set of questions set by the researcher. In other words, I endeavoured to use an interviewing style in which the interviewee was positioned as story-teller rather than as respondent, and in which she took

responsibility for the relevance of the stories she told (HOLLWAY and JEFFERSON, 2000). I attempted to create a context in which *interviews are turned into occasions for storytelling, thus the narrative foundations of the life story are present from the beginning of the research* (DENZIN, 1989:57). This required an altered conception of what interviews are on the part of the interviewee. At times, interviewees tended to construct interviews as domains in which very specific answers were being sought, and so tended to consciously avoid telling stories (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). But the narrative interview requires the expectation that stories are the appropriate response to questions – after all *story-telling stays closer to actual life-events than methods which elicit explanations* (HOLLWAY and JEFFERSON, 2000:32). A build-up of rapport was essential in order for the kind of social cohesion which allows for the co-creation of meanings to be achieved.

Within this social exchange, I endeavoured to use open-ended questions which encouraged a full response and which did not suggest what that response might be. Hollway & Jefferson (2000) counsel to avoid ‘why questions’ as they illicit intellectualisation and abstraction rather than narrative accounts of lived experience. Such responses – what Czarniawska calls the logic of representation – are common place in research interviews which seek to explore organisational practices (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). Respondents sometimes reverted to a description of their role in abstract terms, drawing on discourses current in school and church. Such questions produced data which were disconnected and distanced from their actual lives. But revisiting the areas in question with questions which began ‘Can you tell me about a time when...’ or ‘Can you think of an example of...’ or ‘Can you tell me what it was like when...’ invited the participant to construct narrative as opposed to abstract rationalisations and explanations. Such questions also allowed the participant to direct the conversation, making me as the researcher less likely to impose structure on the narrative. On the other hand, it could be argued that such intellectualisation and abstraction is at times a tool used by social actors to narrate their stories, especially, perhaps, when they themselves emerge from traditions – education and religion – which stress intellectualism. Data arising from such responses are therefore also incorporated into the narratives offered. I attempted

also to respond to the participant's contributions using their own ordering and phrasing (HOLLWAY and JEFFERSON, 2000). In this way I endeavoured to respect and maintain the participant's meaning-frame, facilitating further narratives.

One tool for eliciting narratives is to encourage the recitation of what Kehily (1995) calls 'well-worn stories': a store of ready-made narratives that women might perform in different ways in different contexts. We all compress parts of our lives into *moment(s) of self-narration* (KEHILY, 1995:24) which are illustrative or representative of an aspect of our self-hood. This has the virtue of *indexicality*, of anchoring our accounts to real life events. The telling of these stories was encouraged by asking the women to talk about, for example, a very negative experience in the work-place. I found some participants more inclined to recite such stories than others, but where they were forthcoming such stories presented the opportunity to *reconstruct memories of the past in the context of the present* (KEHILY, 1995:23). Memory is a key factor in the creating and narrating of stories – taking the role of fixing events in the past. However, that 'fixing' is not static, but rather, by telling tales stimulated by memory we are constantly reworking our personal experiences, selecting and privileging some memories whilst discarding or repressing others. This way, our self-narratives are made 'safe'. A narrative methodology, therefore, allows for an understanding of self-identities as unstable or 'plastic' (COHEN, 1994) and constantly reworked by acts of memory, through the telling of tales.

Initial interviews were structured very roughly by taking the participant through the chronology of her life i.e. childhood, student-days, marriage, parenting, retirement etc. (I also encouraged participants to talk about what were to them significant life-events or *epiphanies* (DENZIN, 1989:22), bearing in mind that the turning-points in an individual life are not necessarily the common markers as listed above.) Since sense-making is a retrospective process, requiring time, (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004) such an approach provided a framework for considering how her understanding of herself might have changed with the passage of time, thus giving a sense of the individual's realisation of self through time, her identities over the life-course

(HOCKEY and JAMES, 2003). However, Czarniawska cautions that it is important to allow participants to choose their own time-frame for their narratives (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004). It must also be borne in mind that a chronological paradigm is not necessarily the most useful way to understand emerging constructs of self. Czarniawska suggests that some interviewees may use a *kairotic* time-frame: *a narrative time, punctuated by important events which might even run backward in chronology* (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:52). Certainly, for life stories to bring coherence, sequence is important, since causality can most easily be inferred through sequence (LINDE, 1993). The sequence, however, need not necessarily be chronological. In second and subsequent interviews, therefore, I approached interviews in a more thematic way, delving deeper into the experiences narrated in the initial interviews. Having done some initial analysis of the data emerging from the initial interviews, for subsequent interviews with the same participant I constructed tailor-made narrative questions, which facilitated revisiting and re-exploring some of the stories already narrated, allowing for a joint negotiating of their meaning, as well as attempting to fill in any gaps in the picture co-produced.

Reconstructing (Analysing) the narratives

As another life cannot be replicated it is approximated and allegorised through an ensemble of themes and facts that are the empirical links joining the researched life to the process of interpretation. As such, to emplot is to perform narrative biography and 'effect a mediation' between events and the human experience of time (ERBEN, 1996:163).

All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and selected data arranged chronologically and thematically, as far as possible, while allowing for the participants' own sequencing of stories. Arranging data thematically enabled the identification of central themes within the life trajectory of each individual, and allowed for insight into their subjective awareness of the objective phases of their lives. Events from the participant's professional, religious and personal life were arranged and shaped into an 'emplotted' story (ERBEN, 1996), using the broad themes of lived experience in school, home and church.

Here I employed Czarneiwski's model of *explication, explanation, and exploration* (CZARNIAWSKA, 2004:73) through which the narrative texts were scrutinised. First I attempted to explicate the text, that is, to ask What does the text say? or What is contained in the account? I selected and isolated passages from the interview text from which I hoped to make meaning.

Next I endeavour to explain why it is there. I ask Why does the text say what it does? Interview transcripts were critically interrogated to pick up inconsistencies, contradictions and avoidances in the narratives which allowed me to look beyond the face value of the stories and to unpack the meanings. What are the gaps or exclusions in the stories? What might the participant be avoiding or repressing? In what ways does she reposition herself when telling stories about herself in different contexts? The approach tried to take account of the defensive strategies of the interviewee in which she may unconsciously disguise the meanings of her feelings and actions in order to protect vulnerable aspects of self (HOLLWAY and JEFFERSON, 2000).

Finally I explore the various narratives by asking *How* does this text say what it says? How does it relate to key themes and how are these themes played-out in the plot? Past and current versions of self can then be *juxtaposed in ways that produce different layers of meaning, understandings and reconstructions of identity* (KEHILY, 1995:23). In this way the individual's story is reconstructed and an analytical abstraction of the life, or aspect of the lived experience, is offered. While, as we have seen, this analysis cannot claim to portray the 'true' life, every effort is made to remain close to the stories as told, by returning to and reflecting the words the participants used as they gave meaning and shape to the stories they told (DENZIN, 1989).

The analytical chapter (Chapter 7), draws together and juxta-positions the stories in an attempt to construct meaning through the multiple perspectives on similar lived experiences which the narratives represent. While comparing the stories I do not attempt to find episodes that are the same, but rather to draw upon the analogical

understandings of one event to explore the meanings of another, and in turn to provide the reader with insight into the problem raised. *The cumulative effect of narrative reasoning is a collection of individual cases in which thought moves from case to case instead of from case to generalization* (POLKINGHORNE, 1995:11). In all of this, I consciously reject any essentialised view of the self, either my own or that of my participants. Rather, I proceed on the understanding that *the nature of the self, like the nature of truth, is fluid* (CAMMACK and KALMBACH PHILLIPS, 2002:124).

Concluding Comments

Law claims that, where the elusive or transitory features in social science research, it has often been *distorted into clarity* (LAW, 2004:2). The processes of gender, power and human agency which I endeavour to unpack are complex, and, as Law also points out, *they are not simply complex in the sense that they are technically difficult to grasp.... Rather they are also complex because they necessarily exceed our capacity to know them* (LAW, 2004:6). That is not to say that since the social world cannot be adequately or accurately recorded, we can simply deduce and say anything we like about it. Rather it cautions us to limit ourselves to suggestive and tentative commentary which acknowledges that we have not only described, but have helped to produce, the 'realities' we present. And our attempts are ultimately messy because *simple clear descriptions don't work if what they are describing is not itself very coherent. The very attempt to be clear simply increases the mess* (LAW, 2004:2).

In the end, the complex socio-political worlds of education and religion in Scotland cannot be disentangled from the subjectively experienced lives of the social actors whose worlds they are. Any attempt to explain the inter-relationships involved will remain inevitably ragged. However, with these caveats in place, I maintain that Life History methodology is well suited to the task in hand. Life History narratives, and their interpretation, shed light both on the individual's agentic lived experience, and

on the structural processes and constraints within which lives are lived. In so doing they

illustrate the relationship between the individual and society; they demonstrate how women negotiate their "exceptional" gender status in their daily lives; and they make possible the examination of the links between the evolution of subjectivity and the development of female identity (BLOOM, 1995:100).

Drawing, as I do, on a theoretical framework which combines notions of power as ideological with understandings of gender as embodied performance, an interpretive approach to narrative allows for meaning-making processes which can account for the ways in which such discursive practices shape lives. Further, given my own positionality as an 'insider' within the social worlds of my participants, this methodology allows me to utilise my own experience and consciousness, and indeed to offer my own narrative, in ways which are deliberately self-conscious and reflexive.

Chapters Four and Five provide detailed contextual material about the social worlds of participants. Chapter Four provides an account of the histories and theologies of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland while Chapter Five explores the conditions for silencing which emerge from the structures of power produced by the historical and theological processes outlined, and draws initial links between the social world of religion and the nature of primary teaching as work. By thus providing the 'settings' for the lives of participants I hope to offer more powerful lenses through which the narratives can be assimilated.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘YOU ARE EVE’: WOMEN AND PRESBYTERIANISM IN SCOTLAND

In order to contextualise the lives of the participants, I offer the following discussion on the history and culture of Presbyterian religion in Scotland. This allows for an understanding of the church as an institution (or institutions) and for an exploration of the ways in which women are positioned by the nature and characteristics of this form of Protestantism.

Histories

The Church of Scotland

Presbyterianism, Orr MacDonald argues, has had a profound influence in shaping the character and ethos of Scotland.

As a cultural shaper, it has had a bearing on all who have lived in post-Reformation Scotland, whether their roots are in Protestant, Catholic or other traditions of belief and community (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:5).

Presbyterianism is a form of church government which evolved as a distinctive expression of Protestantism in Scotland. Based on principles drawn from the teachings of the French Reformer, Jean Calvin during the 16th century, it sought to return to what was understood as a New Testament pattern of ecclesiastical discipline and orderly worship maintained by lay elders and teaching elders, or ministers. Its founding principles included the parity of elders and bishops (ministers), the plurality of such in each congregation, and the ‘connectionalism’ of the church - all individual congregations forming one church under a system of subordinated jurisdiction and graduated courts (HENDERSON, 1641). At local level, each congregation is governed by a Kirk Session – a group of elders presided over by the minister. This court is answerable to the higher courts of ‘presbytery’ and ‘synod’

which are made up of ministers and elders representing congregations over a wider geographical area. And these courts, in turn, are answerable to the General Assembly, the supreme court of the Kirk. This order is that of the established church in Scotland, The Church of Scotland, or, parochially 'The Kirk', and is also replicated in the smaller seceding Presbyterian churches, the largest of these being the Free Church of Scotland.

From within this order emerged an emphasis on authority – arguably that of the Bible, but the trustees of that authority were ministers and elders. In particular, respect for the minister, and the legitimising of his dominance over parish life, (and parishioners' lives) became typical of Scottish Presbyterian culture. Further, in many parishes, elders exercised moral (sexual) control over parishioners. This power positioning could be said to be symbolised by the use of space in Presbyterian worship. In response to what was understood as the iconolatry of the Roman Catholic tradition, Reformers ensured that church buildings were stripped of the ornamental, and this simplicity has remained typical of Presbyterian Church buildings, even in 21st century architecture. Post-Reformation churches removed the ornate altar as the focal point of public worship and replaced it with the pulpit, located to the front and centre of the Sanctuary. The rationale for this, arguably, was not the elevation of the minister but the centrality of the Bible through the preaching of the Word (MACDONALD, 2002). However, as Lefebvre reminds us (LEFEBVRE, 1991), the use of space is the producer and not merely the product of social action, and the weekly ascension of the minister to this elevated physical position over the people was powerfully iconic. Similarly, the situation of elders in the 'elders' box', to the front of the sanctuary beneath the pulpit, is historically attributed to the need for them to be on hand to protect the pulpit from heresy. But this weekly visual display of an all-male ecclesiastical hierarchy was (and is) a potent reminder to worshipers of the order of things.

There is a certain irony in the fact that, in Scotland, the Protestant church, which at its inception set out to free the people from the tyranny of Rome, has itself come to be conceptualised as tyrannical and darkly authoritarian. Theologically the emphasis

shifted at the Reformation from adherence to religious laws and ordinances to *saving grace* on repentance – undeserved and un-earned forgiveness in this life and the next. The Reformers' emphasis on *the priesthood of all believers* (one of the tenets of Martin Luther) had the potential for the redistribution of power from church leaders to parishioners. Salvation was no longer in the gift of the priest, but within reach of the penitent worshiper.

Yet, in contemporary discourse, the austerity of Scottish Calvinism takes the blame for all manner of ill:

Within popular culture, Scottish Presbyterianism is frequently used as a metonym for a variety of unhappy conditions ranging from Gordon Brown's economic 'prudence' to the oppressive patriarchy in Lars Von Trier's acclaimed film 'Breaking the Waves' (1996) (MACDONALD, 2002:66).

This view has been propagated, not only in popular discourse, but also in the writings of recent religious historians who pinpoint the Presbyterian Kirk of the past as one of the key flaws in the whole of Scottish civil society, as observed by writers like Brown (BROWN, 2006). In addition, the literary giants of Scotland have turned on her religion with some ferocity. Scott, Muir, Crichton-Smith and Burns all portray Calvinism as bigoted, intolerant and hypocritical. There is a sense in which *the momentous influence of Presbyterianism in Scotland's historical development has been widely reduced to crude notions of the Knoxian 'bogeyman'* (WALKER, 2002:254).

This positioning of the faith of the establishment in Scotland as a *linguistic sign for repression* (MACDONALD, 2002:62) is unfair given the social role played by the Kirk pre-welfare state, for example, and the educational heritage bequeathed to the state in the mid nineteenth century (MACLEOD, 1996). It was Knox's own vision, after all, which led to a school in every parish, and the Church of Scotland continued to hold local government responsibilities in education and welfare provision as late as 1929 (WALKER, 1996). Brown speaks of this view that society in Scotland was controlled by religious men for the subjugation of the masses as *a powerful myth upon which rises so much of the narrative of the nation's submersion into darkness and the struggle to come out of it* (BROWN, 2006:85).

While the popular vilification of Calvinism, such as in Craig's polemic (CRAIG, 2003), may be due, therefore, to a selective remembering of Scotland's past, it seems inescapable that the Presbyterian church in Scotland has been guilty of repressing women. By de-stabilising priesthood, the Reformation brought the potential for the liberation of women, since they too were *priests and kings* in the new order, enjoying spiritual equality with men. Yet, by adhering closely to a doctrine of separate spheres for women and men, the Kirk

preached a strongly patriarchal message about the ritual, moral and practical inferiority of women which compromised the potential egalitarianism of that central Reformed doctrine, the priesthood of all believers...(Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:4).

And so the potential emancipatory implications of the Reformation for women remained dormant. In reality the Kirk failed to promote freedom for women in church or public life. Instead, the emphasis of Calvin and Knox on the 'natural order' or 'creation order', the God-man-woman hierarchy, meant that women were to live in submission and obedience to men (for a fuller discussion on this see section on Theologies later in the chapter). The Reformation, it is argued, pushed women more effectively into the private domain (HENDRY, 1992). In the 16th and 17th centuries, offences ranging from gossiping to alleged adultery were adjudicated on by Kirk Sessions and presbyteries and women were *...subjected to punishments which were intended to silence, to humiliate, to shame, to demonise and above all to control them* (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:25). Although men were not immune from punishment for sexual offences, women's bodies were the site of evidence of such offences, and thus regarded as the site of sin requiring intrusive investigation (BROWN, 2006).

(It should be noted, perhaps, that many of the accounts which give rise to this picture are disproportionately weighted by historical records mainly derived from minutes of Presbyterian government which inevitably deal with issues of conflict, but seldom record acts of succour and philanthropy which were also the remit and practice of church leaders (MACDONALD, 2002). It could be argued that the oversight of the

Kirk session was designed to protect rather than to oppress women and their children (BROWN, 2006).)

The negative positioning of women was no new phenomenon post-Reformation. Within the tradition of Christianity there has been a lingering association between woman and evil, or at least a propensity for evil. This can be traced as far back as Eve's deviation in the Biblical creation narrative, and the early church Fathers such as Tertullian and Augustine were openly misogynist. The witch-hunts of the 17th century – of which over 80 % of the victims in Scotland were female - established an uncertain relationship between the early protestant church and women, positioning them (and homosexual men) as the enemies of God (HENDRY, 1992). This positioning resonates down through history and is typified in accounts such as those of the Magdalene Homes for fallen woman in 19th century Scotland, where women were regarded as the embodiment of social evil (GORDON and BREITENBACH, 1990).

John Knox, the iconic hero of Scottish Protestantism, is notorious for his alleged contempt and hostility towards women: '*you are Eve. ... You are the port and gate of the devil.*' (Tertullian quoted by Knox in *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, 1558). While these comments were undoubtedly politically motivated (against Mary Queen of Scots) his 'blast' reveals his more general view that women were morally dangerous and that any woman in public life was a sin against nature (BROWN, 2006). It should be pointed out, however, that this was typical of the understanding of the day, shared by his contemporaries, not only churchmen, but also those opposed to any faith such as those drawing on the teachings of Aristotle (GRAHAM, 2001). Indeed, it is sometimes argued that Calvin, on whom Knox based his theologies, held views on women and women's equality which were innovative for the time. His insistence on the equal rights of husband and wife to instigate divorce proceedings, for example, resulted in the Geneva City Council changing the law in support of women in 1561, although this was later rescinded (JENKINS BLAISDELL, 1985). Further, Calvin's sermons and commentaries conveyed an acceptance of women and an acknowledgement of their

importance in, for example, the spiritual instruction of children, which was radical for the early modern period, and which made Calvinism appealing to the educated women of the day.

Whatever Knox's intentions, and despite the prevailing disregard for women at this point in history, the Scots tradition has come to understand Knox's position as characteristic of a deep vein of misogyny in Calvinist Presbyterian culture (BROWN, 2006).

Although the hierarchy of the Catholic Church is equally patriarchal, it has, throughout history, at least had the merit of granting women a visible, if contained, ministry within the monastic sisterhood (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a). For Catholic women, the option of joining a religious order provided an opportunity to 'escape' patriarchy and embrace some female autonomy, and female community, without any challenge to faith or to the established order on the part of the women involved. The removal of the option of monastic life left women without alternative to domestic and sexual servitude. The Christian ideal of celibacy was replaced, for women, with a new ideal. The only legitimate feminine role for a Christian woman became that of wife and mother.

The elevated position afforded by the Roman Catholic tradition to the person of Mary also arguably places value on femininity which is absent from the Reformed faith (although at the same time it sets for women an impossible standard – perpetual virginity and motherhood combined). The removal of Marian iconography from places of worship following the Reformation resulted in the further masculinisation of religion. It may also be argued that the person of Mary represented the compassion and mercy of God, and that her removal left those in the Reformed tradition with an understanding of the divine as distant and stern.

From the mid 19th to mid 20th century there has been a perceptible swing in ecclesiastical discourse from woman as evil temptress, to woman as domestic

goddess and symbol of purity and piety, perhaps reflecting changes in social attitudes of the day:

Peter Gay, in his interesting study of Victorian aggression, argues that the cult of womanliness and its symbiotic opposite, the cult of manliness, were central to the 19th-century bourgeois culture. (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:23).

But this accolade applies only to woman who are prepared to embody the myth of Victorian domestic serenity. And, it is argued, this change was mirrored by a burgeoning of the sex industry.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that there was a close connection between the ethos of bourgeois 'purity' and the sale of sex by poor women to middle-class men (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:33).

Indeed, it is oft quipped that Edinburgh's brothels do their best business during the General Assembly.

And yet there have been counter discourses and there are alternative narratives and, even within the masculine hegemony that has been Scottish Calvinism, there is space for characterising Scots women as agents rather than as mere victims of history. There are historical accounts of the activities of women in 19th and early 20th century Presbyterianism who, responding to the emerging freedoms for women in society, attempted to transcend the given-ness of their situation within the Kirk, (although they tend to be accounts of relatively privileged wealthy women, often written by churchmen who either supported or strongly opposed their endeavours (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a).) During the period between 1830-1930, many of these women found ways to 'feminise' the Kirk and to build communities of women, particularly through their involvement in missionary work and other philanthropic endeavours. The involvement of women in this work, it could be argued, provided the catalyst that led women to fight for the right to a university education. Indeed, some of the earliest women graduates in medicine in Scotland were motivated by their desire to serve the church as missionaries (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a), and upon graduation were employed by the Kirk.

The Victorian era brought with it a more feminine emphasis within Presbyterianism, Evangelicalism bringing an emphasis on God's love, and ministers expressing this in

sermons which were more emotional and less doctrinal. Further, alongside the patriarchal family structure encouraged by the church, there often co-existed a kind of matriarchy through which some women exercised considerable influence over home and community. Brown goes so far as to argue that between 1800 and 1960, Presbyterian churches in Scotland became highly feminised. Despite being under male control, he suggests that the popular conception of piety on which the cultural power of the church rested was essentially feminine (BROWN, 2006:102). Rituals associated with the church – marriage and baptism – were dominated by women, he claims, and churches services *had a strongly feminine atmosphere, with women in their most luxurious clothes* (BROWN, 2006:103). It is true that, over this period, the proportion of women regularly attending church services meant that they were in a majority in the pews. His claims that women dominated, however, sit uneasily with their continued enforced silence in worship, and exclusion from office.

Even in the 20th century, the established church continued to prohibit the ordination of women to eldership or ministry, invoking the Pauline injunction that women should keep silent in the churches. Yet the Church of Scotland, having commissioned women as deacons from 1935 and allowed them to preach since 1949, was one of the first national churches to ordain women as elders in 1966 and as ministers in 1968.

The influence of the churches in Scotland has diminished considerably with the secularisation of recent decades. I would argue, however, that, because notions of nationality are infused with a sense of antiquity (ANDERSON, 1983), a strong association between Scottishness and Presbyterianism (and between Presbyterianism and patriarchy) is still imagined. Walker concludes that, while in terms of the faith it represents, the Kirk has largely lost its dominant position in Scottish society, it remains at least a nominal token of Scottish identity (WALKER, 1996). This association is reproduced in images of Presbyterianism (e.g. rural Kirk buildings) in Scottish guidebooks, picture postcards etc. While Presbyterianism may sit uneasily with the Celtic romanticism which Scottish tourist literature seeks to portray, such religious iconography continues to be used simply because it is identifiably Scottish (MACDONALD, 2002).

It could be argued, therefore, that the association between Scottishness and Presbyterianism continues to position women on the margins of Scottishness, just as they have been set on the margins of 'churchmanship', and even sometimes on the margins of morality. Further, if we view history as not simply a record of the past, but as a resource for contemporary understanding (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a) we can utilise it in arriving at an understanding of sense-making processes used by the women whose history it is.

The Free Church of Scotland

From the mid 18th century, the Presbyterian church in Scotland has been notorious for her divisions. The Free Church came into being in 1843, following a schism known as The Disruption, when a third of the leaders of the Kirk walked out of the general assembly over the issue of patronage – the right of wealthy land lords to impose a minister on the parish irrespective of the will of the church members. Unlike the Church of England, the Church of Scotland had always claimed independent spiritual jurisdiction over its own affairs, but this was under threat from 'patronage' which some saw as the state's encroachment on the spiritual independence of the Kirk. This issue was the catalyst for a separation between two factions in the Kirk – the moderates and the Evangelicals - and followed a considerable period of unrest, sometimes referred to as the 10 years of conflict. The Evangelicals in the Kirk decided to renounce the state connection (including endowment) and set up the Church of Scotland *Free* (free, that is, from state control).

In 1900, the majority Free Church of Scotland united with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland to form the United Free Church of Scotland, which in turn reunited with the Church of Scotland in 1929. However, a minority of the original Free Church remained outside of the union of 1900 and remain a separate denomination to this day. Known pejoratively as the *Wee Frees*, (although this term is also frequently used to refer to smaller denominations such as the Free Presbyterians) their distinctives are belief in the inerrancy of scripture, unqualified

acceptance of the Westminster Confession and adherence to the Regulative Principle. According to this principle, worship should include only those elements which are sanctioned by Scripture; and this is taken to mean, in practice, that only Psalms are sung in church services, and sung without instrumental accompaniment. In addition, the Free Church continues to insist on exclusively male leadership, calling on literal interpretations of Pauline injunctions on women teaching to exclude women from ordination to the offices of minister, elder or deacon. (Further discussion of these distinctions and their implications can be found later in this chapter).

Although the Free Church now represents a tiny proportion of Scottish people (approximately 6 thousand members and up to 10 thousand adherents, predominately in the north west of Scotland), the Disruption was a major event in modern Scottish history, effecting not only the church, but also Scottish civic life.

In Evangelical communities such as the Free Church of Scotland, personal faith is central and often expressed in terms of ‘conversion’ or, in highland communities, ‘having the curam’ (PARMAN, 2005) (although this use of language is contested (Macleod in MACDONALD et al., 2004). In the Free Church the ultimate statement of conversion is in ‘coming forward’ (not to be confused with ‘going-forward’, the alter-call practice of American evangelists). Applicants who ‘come forward’ are interviewed by the Kirk Session about their understanding of, and commitment to, the faith, and if the Kirk Session are satisfied they come into communicant membership i.e. they take communion and are added to the role of members eligible to vote in matters such as the election of office bearers. (Those who regularly attend services but who don’t ‘come forward’ are also regarded as part of the church community and are usually known as ‘adherents’.) Member’s understanding of conversion is rooted in the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, whereby divine choice is the primary determinant of an individual’s salvation. For this reason

believers are fastidious in referring to conversion in the passive tense: ‘so-and-so was converted’ as if to emphasise that there was nothing they could do to make themselves the recipients of God’s grace (MACDONALD et al., 2004:163).

There seems to me to be a deep irony in the current (and to some extent deserved) perception of the Free Church as socially conservative, when its founding fathers were the social reformers of their day. Dr Thomas Chalmers, a key player in the events of 1843, conducted an ambitious but successful social experiment to aid the poor of Glasgow. Dr James Begg was a founding member of the Co-operative Building Society, which sought to remove working-class people from the slums to better housing and which fought for the rights of women to own their own residential property (see BEGG, 1866). Hugh Miller, surely one of Scotland's most remarkable *lads o' pairts*, used his weekly magazine *The Witness* to call for social reform. These, and many other prominent men, were willing to set themselves on a collision course with the government in order to protect the rights of their people. However, it could be argued that, even then, their concern was less for the democratisation of the church – power to the people – than for the sovereignty of the church within its own domain.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that the Free Church has failed to move with the times. On the contrary, it is currently under some very contemporary influences, ranging from managerialist restructuring of committee systems to issues of cyberspace ownership. Yet their stance on women's ordination remains unchanged. At one level, such a position could be viewed as a sincerely held faith-position, but, it has also served to justify the continuing marginalization of women in church life in ways that cannot be sustained theologically. The structure of Presbyterianism is such that only office bearers (men) can serve within the committee system even when the nature of a committee's work may not, by any hermeneutic, be Biblically proscribed for women. And yet, calls for women's place and status which were being fought for in the Kirk more than a hundred years ago, and which stop short of the 'breach' of any Pauline injunctions, are still not won for women in the Free Church. They are still ineligible for election to any court of the church, whether the work of that court implies the spiritual authority to which the Pauline passages refer or not. Almost without exception, the roles afforded them in the life of the church are supportive and domestic.

Interestingly, the Free Church of Scotland did achieve an historical first for women in Scotland. At the first General Assembly of the newly formed Free Church in 1843, there emerged a debate as to whether women members of the church had the right to vote in elections to choose a minister. The practice in the Kirk had been that this was the right only of male heads-of-household. The debate was contentious and the vote close, but the outcome was in women's favour (although the wording of the Act left the matter open to different interpretations by presbyteries). This was some three-quarters of a century before Scottish women won the same right in civil matters. Yet, given that Free Church leaders had walked away from the established church and its wealth over the rights of individual members to choose their own minister, the fact that this issue gave rise to any debate at all within the church courts,

testifies to the tension between the Protestant acceptance of individual equality among human souls, and the age-old Christian tradition of assuming male humanity to be normative, and the female version to be defective or incomplete (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:176).

In May 2007, I sat through a session of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, something I had done often in the past but little in recent years. I was struck afresh by the absolute exclusion of women and the feminine from this forum, the ultimate authority (under the divine) in the church. Not only are all commissioners men, but the discussion in the two hours over which I was present betrayed no acknowledgement of women as part of the church. There was talk of brotherly relations, of fellowship with men in other denominations, of the 'worthy and courageous men' who maintained an Evangelical witness within the Kirk. A minister serving as chaplain to a Scottish army regiment spoke at length about his work with 'these young lads'. The only direct reference to a woman came in the form of an example of moral difficulties faced by Kirk Sessions in matters of sexual propriety. Similarly, a trawl of the Reports to the General Assembly of 2007 (Free-Church-of-Scotland, 2007) revealed few mentions of women outwith the contexts of debate on the evils of abortion, or the proper handling of *women, children and vulnerable adults* in cases of church discipline or child protection. What Orr MacDonald found in historical accounts of the Kirk (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a),

seems true in living practice of the Free Church today – women are present only as deviants or exceptions.

And yet this is not true either. The annual meeting of women in the Free Church (the AGM of *Women for Mission*) enjoys a higher attendance (over 300) than any other regular meeting of the Church, other than perhaps a Stornoway Sunday service. This para-church organisation, of the sort women have been running alongside Presbyterian churches since the 19th century (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a), raises money for good causes and provides a forum for community amongst women. Yet it affords women opportunity for service without offering status within the Church, and it tenders no resistance to the exclusively male power structure. This is an example, perhaps, of the capacity of women to respond creatively, if not critically, to their environment.

For both women and men, Presbyterian culture is one of aspiration towards high achievement: *Improvement is seen as a key feature not just of personal identity but of morality, the two being closely intertwined* (MACDONALD, 1997:184). Many of the women involved in WFM are high achievers, holding responsible, powerful and prestigious jobs in society, and yet contenting themselves with a culture of tea-making within their own communities. Their success in career terms, and their creativity in para-church activity, makes their complicity in their subordination in the church all the more intriguing. Even in baptisms and funerals, the very rituals of life and death, women stand aside. Men hold the baby and take the vows. Men lower the deceased into the grave.

Conclusion

The value of a Presbyterian heritage in Scotland is contested. On the one hand it might be understood as relatively democratic and egalitarian, or the other it is regarded as austere and repressive. Similarly, the literature, with some notable exceptions, tends to be polarised between ‘insiders’ who fail to acknowledge, let alone problematise, patriarchy in the analyses they offer, and ‘outsiders’ who denounce the churches as bigoted and tyrannical but who neglect to engage with the

reality of faith in human agency. For women in particular, the heritage is an ambiguous one, incorporating as it does narratives of liberation alongside those of containment and even of oppression.

Ideally, in order to explore the identity-shaping possibilities of this background for my interviewees, I would want to refer to texts which deal with life histories of women from Evangelical Presbyterian communities in Scotland. As far as I am aware, no such texts exist. While there are historical accounts of Presbyterian women, such as William Knox's account of Mary Slessor (KNOX, 2006), and more general ethnographic accounts of highland communities which deal with the theme in passing (PARMAN, 2005) (MACDONALD, 1997), there is a dearth of sustained qualitative work which deals first-hand with the lived experience of such women in Scotland.

Yet, there is other material which can illuminate the position. The Presbyterian church in Scotland today is constituted, not only by Scottish ecclesiastical history, but also by the theological creeds and confessions which are associated with Presbyterianism and with the broader Christian tradition, and it is to such I turn in the following section.

Theologies

For a feminist to be a Christian is indeed for her to swallow a fishbone. It must stick in her throat. To be a Christian is to be placed in a heteronomous position. Feminists believe in autonomy (HAMPSON, 1996a:1)

Affiliation with any faith community means that members and adherents are exposed to influential ideologies and distinctive social resources which become the repertoire of their faith tradition (BARTKOWSKI and GHAZAL READ, 2003). This section outlines in more depth some of the theological positions held by the Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and explores the ways in which these theologies, and the cultural practices which have emerged from them, might position women such as the participants in this study.

The Bible – authorship, infallibility and androcentricity

The conservative Presbyterian churches in Scotland hold to the doctrine of sole and supreme authority of scripture, as understood by the Westminster Divines:

The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him,
(The Shorter Catechism of [1647] Answer 2).

The Free Church of Scotland understands the books which make up the canon of the Old and New Testaments to be ‘God-breathed’, or divinely inspired, and the writings within each book to be ‘infallibly true’ and ‘entirely perfect’, and to be used by God to guide Christians today. This does not necessarily mean that all biblical text is understood literally. Rather, believers recognise the books of the Bible to be made up of a variety of genres, some historical, others poetical etc. Also, among the denomination’s clergy and office-bearers there is found some difference of opinion regarding interpretation in some matters, for example the age of the earth and the extent to which the creation narrative should be taken as literal or symbolic. But believers do understand the biblical text to be infallible, whilst acknowledging that interpretation is not.

The official position in the Church of Scotland is less definite. Office-bearers, on ordination, vow to *believe the Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the supreme rule of faith and life* (COX, 1936:521). They also vow to hold to the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith. In practice, however, there is scope in the Kirk for a wider diversity of belief and interpretation, and many office-bearers would not hold the scriptures to be ‘infallibly true’.

In both denominations, a worship service will traditionally include two Bible readings, often (although not always) one from the Old and one from the New Testament. The sermon will usually be based directly on one of these readings, very often a direct exposition of one verse. In addition, within Evangelical churches, it would be the traditional practice of church members to read portions of the Bible during the week, whether in family worship or in private devotions. The Bible, therefore, is absolutely central to faith and to the lived experience of practising faith within Presbyterianism, and particularly so within Evangelical Presbyterianism.

Yet the Bible, as text, is problematic for women. The (human) author of each individual book in both Old and New Testaments is, as far as biblical scholarship is able to discern, male. The narratives are deeply androcentric, stories of kings and priests and wars, where male experience is routinely privileged and women are all but invisible. God is repeatedly portrayed as *the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, but never as the God of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel (JULE, 2008). In Old Testament law, women are owned, like livestock, by men. The patriarchal narratives are punctuated by ‘Texts of Terror’ (TRIBBLE, 1984), (e.g. the banishment of Hagar, the rape of Tamar) in which the exploitation of women is vividly portrayed, but often left unproblematised. In New Testament narratives, particularly those of the gospels, women enjoy something of a restoration to their divine image-bearing status, when they are related to by Christ as fully human and included amongst his followers even when this meant flouting cultural gender norms. However, Christ’s closest followers, the ‘disciples’, were all men. Further, the epistles, and in particular the

Pauline ones, cast renewed shadows on the position of women, by seemingly restricting authority and power within the new faith to men.

The application of biblical texts in the context of worship services is equally problematic. Narratives involving male characters tend to be applied to all Christian believers – male as normative – while the few narratives in which women have centre stage (Mary & Martha, Hannah, Esther) tend to be applied only to women (PORTER, 2004), to teach, not basic Christian principle, but some message about womanliness. And in the context of the Free Church, that application is itself always constructed and performed by men. The androcentric nature of biblical text is therefore perpetuated by interpretation via male experience and understanding, generally omitting any acknowledgement of issues, let alone ‘terrors’, for women, in the text.

The application of biblical text to Christian living, whether from pulpit or by scholarly or devotional writings, raises the problematic of hermeneutics. Even where a Westminster view of infallibility is held, there is disagreement as to distinctions between the meaning of the text in its original context, and its transcultural ‘truth’. So, for example, on the issue of women’s ordination, there is a spectrum of thought, each extreme accusing the other of self-serving interpretation. However, within the life of Evangelical churches, there is often a failure to acknowledge the processes of interpretation, and a reduction of hermeneutics to what Stackhouse calls Biblicism - *the-Bible-says-so-so-I-believe-it* (STACKHOUSE, 2005:107). Within the Free Church of Scotland, therefore, the common-sense ‘view-from-the-pew’ would be that the Bible is the ‘true’ word of God, that the Bible teaches that office in the church is for men only, and, therefore, that the ordination of women is blatant disobedience to God. Consequently, if women express any discomfort with this view, or with the negative positioning of women by more general biblical themes and narratives, this is constructed as defiance against God. *For a woman to refuse to accept the subject role is for her to defy God* (JENKINS BLAISDELL, 1985:27).

The 'Maleness' of God

For Mary Daly, a prominent ex-Catholic feminist theologian, the persistent maleness of God in Christian discourse led to her ultimate rejection of the church because, for her, *if God is male, then male is God* (Daly in JULE, 2008:69). Most Christian doctrine (including Calvinistic doctrine) would contend that God is a spirit, and is therefore neither male nor female. However, the practice of using male terminology for God is almost uniform in Christendom, and no less so within either Evangelical Presbyterianism or the tradition of the Kirk. Within the Kirk, the practice remains, perhaps, largely due to the absence of feminist awareness and activism. On the other hand, within the smaller Presbyterian churches there is an absolute insistence on the use of male terminology for God, and a strong resistance to addressing God as mother (BRIGGS, 2004), the feminine seeming to devalue the divine in a way regarded as heretical.

The debate on this question is somewhat polarised between those on the extreme right (The Council for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood appear to believe that God **is** male, or at least 'masculine') and liberal feminist theologians whose views on biblical infallibility would differ somewhat from the traditional Presbyterian perspective, and considerably from the current Evangelical one. But Evangelical feminist scholars of biblical text have argued that God's revelation of himself in male terms has to do with relationship (father, son, *abba*) and accommodating human understanding, rather than with some sort of male essence. The issue, they argue, is not about sexual or gender essence. It is about language (VAN LEEUWEN, 1993).

Closely bound up in the presumed maleness of God, is the incarnation narrative in which God becomes human, but takes on male form. In Christian discourse there is a constant slippage between an emphasis on God taking human form, and on God taking male form. The reaction of Christians to female representations of Christ, such as to *Christa*, a sculpture by Edwina Sandys which portrays a female Christ crucified, betrays the belief that Christ's incarnated maleness is necessarily central to orthodoxy (CLAGUE, 2005). Instead of seeing that

the Christian cross – rendered virtually invisible by its ubiquity and exhaustion as a symbol – is given a new potentiality through its female face-lift and is thereby revitalized for use in a contemporary religious context (CLAGUE, 2005:45),

evangelicals regarded the art as blasphemous and campaigned for its removal from public display. For Evangelicals the problem with such representations, even as art, is not merely that they subvert their assumption that male stands for all humanity. Rather, female representations of God incarnate are desecration, because *to imagine God or speak of God as feminine does not simply change the God image for these people; it destroys it* (Scheider in CLAGUE, 2005:46).

Yet, there are, as Christian feminists point out (e.g. JULE, 2008), many biblical examples of the portrayal of God using feminine imagery. God is variously imaged as a hen gathering her chicks (Luke 13:34), as a mother bird (Psalm 17:8), as a mother bear (Hosea 13:8), as a mid-wife (Psalm 22:9), as a woman in labour (Isaiah 42:14), and even as the womb itself (Job 38:29). Yet such images tend to be downplayed in favour of God as ruler, warrior, creator. In any case, feminine god-images which centre round motherhood, bring their own set of problems for women, particularly child-less women, suggesting motherhood as the nearest a woman might come to god-like-ness.

Despite the belief, therefore, in God as spirit, this insistence on using male language and imagery for the divine results in a perception that maleness is more akin to divinity than femaleness, and positions women negatively, even oppositionally, in regard to the divine. *The symbol of the Father God... has [made the] mechanisms for the oppression of women appear right and fitting* (Mary Daly in PEVEY et al., 1996:174). For women of faith, all this can be deeply problematic, especially if it exists, as it inevitably does, alongside an essentialist or biologically determinist understanding of gender. In what sense are we as women to understand the divine to be *touched with the feeling of our infirmities* or *in all points tempted like as we are* (AV Hebrews 4:15) if he (?) is essentially male, and necessarily male in incarnation? Through this practice, despite the teachings on the spiritual equality of all human persons, the feminine is side-lined and subordinated.

Generic Masculine Language In Worship

A further debate about gender and language is that surrounding inclusive language in biblical translations, in songs of worship and in pulpit discourse. Traditionally the Presbyterian Church in Scotland has used the King James translation of the Bible (the 'Authorised Version'). Here, as one would expect in a text dating back to the 17th century, there are no concessions to inclusive language. Over the last three decades, however, many congregations (both FC and CofS) have adopted the New International Version, a translation published in the 1970s, purporting to be a modern translation, but with a continued use of the generic masculine. Christian women have, therefore, continually to calculate whether Biblical references to 'man', 'men', 'him' are intended to include them (JULE, 2008). An updated version of this text, Today's New International Version, published in 2003, attempted to address the problem of exclusive language by the elimination of generic masculine nouns and pronouns. Broadly, this was an attempt to bring the NIV abreast of contemporary biblical scholarship and of shifts in English idioms and usage. The translators – for the most part the same team of scholars as translated the original NIV – regard it as a superior translation. Yet, many Evangelicals, including those who use the NIV, have reacted in violent opposition to this translation, seeing it as a concession to the 'feminist agenda'. Emotions run high – high enough for Carson to refer to reactions to the TNIV as 'Bible-rage' (STACKHOUSE, 2005:118). As a result, congregations which were eager to embrace the innovative NIV in the 1970s, have retained it and have not upgraded to the more recent version, where inclusive language might have rendered women more visible. On the other hand, some have argued that *to change the language of patriarchy in the Bible may only disguise the misogyny embedded within it* (JULE, 2008:71).

Whether the question of inclusive language is regarded as evil, or merely trivial, Traditionals, Liberals and Evangelicals in Scottish Presbyterianism have tended to maintain the generic masculine in the discourse of worship, resulting in a continued linguistic invisibility for women. Thus women continue to experience *the words, symbols and dynamics of worship...* (as) *disorienting and disempowering, failing to*

name, address or celebrate the realities of their lives (ORR MACDONALD, 2000b:4).

The Doctrine of the Trinity

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity incorporates two essential understandings of the nature of God, namely unity and plurality (MACLEOD, 1998). On the one hand God is understood to be one, to be a single entity. On the other hand, God is triune – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, these three being *the same in substance, equal in power and glory* (Shorter Catechism [1647] Answer 6). This doctrine is derived, not from any individual biblical text but from a combination of texts which describe the one-ness of God, the deity of Christ, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit (MACLEOD, 2006). In the Old Testament, despite some hints at plurality, the emphasis is on divine unity: *Hear O Israel, Jahweh our God is one* (Deuteronomy, 6:4 AV). But from New Testament texts, and in particular from the narratives of the incarnation, biblical scholars conclude plurality. In other words the concept of Trinity is implicit rather than explicit in biblical narrative. Despite the implicit nature of the doctrine, however, the basic concept of the Trinity is one on which the Christian church has substantially agreed (give or take a few skirmishes) since the Council of Nicea in the fourth century.

What is of interest for this study is the question of how, in the particular traditions of Presbyterianism and Evangelicalism, the three ‘persons’ of the Trinity are understood to relate to each other and the extent to which there is understood to be hierarchy within the ‘Godhead’. This is of interest because the concept of hierarchy within the Trinity is used by apologists for the God-man-women ‘creation order’ to explain the apparent anomaly of the spiritual equality of the sexes and the continued subordination of women. Such argue for a distinction between *the ontological and the economic Trinity* in defence of the *functional subordination* of women (GRUDEM, 2004). They argue that although the persons in the Godhead are equally God, they are functionally distinct, that the Father sends the Son and the Son submits to the father. Difference in functional roles does not entail ontological superiority or

inferiority, they argue. Similarly, women and men, understood to 'image' God, are created with ontological equality but allocated complementarity of roles. And the women's role is to submit to the will of the man (at least in home and church), just as the Son submitted to the will of the Father (MACDONALD, 2005).

This particular understanding of the Trinity is one which has gained large acceptance over the last three decades amongst Evangelicals in the United States and beyond, particularly following Wayne Grudem's best-selling seminary textbook *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (1994). Although it has been adopted neither by creed nor by Act of Assembly, it is also one which has found recent popularity in the grass-roots teaching of the Free Church of Scotland (MACDONALD, 2005) (DOW, 2006). However it is by no means unanimously agreed among Reformed theologians that there is any subordination within the Trinity. Rather, the emphasis of many in the Presbyterian churches has historically been on the equality of the persons of the Trinity as set forth in the Athanasian Creed: *in this Trinity none is before and none is after; none is greater and none is lesser, but the whole three persons are coeternal and coequal* (SMITH & SCHAFF, 1877:68).

Giles regards the subordination argument as a modern day reinvention of the Trinity, motivated by the desire to prevent women from taking on ministry and leadership roles in the church (GILES, 2006). He argues that the functional or economic subordination implied by the incarnation narratives is not part of the eternal essence of Father and Son, but rather a function of the limitations of incarnation. Further, he argues that this is the historical teaching of the Reformed church and of the Westminster Confession (to which both the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland subscribe as their 'subordinate standard').

In arguing for the eternal subordination of the Son to support the doctrine of the permanent subordination of women, ... they have in ignorance broken with how the best of theologians and the creeds and confessions have concluded the Scriptures should be read and understood (GILES, 2006:309).

Further, he argues that Calvin, on whose teachings Scottish Presbyterianism is built, would not allow for a hierarchical understanding of the Trinity:

He [Calvin] says the Father may be thought of by frail human minds as 'first' the 'beginning of [Divine] activity' and the 'fountainhead' of deity. However, he also insists that all three divine persons are eternal: none is chronologically first; all are equal in power and authority; all three always work inseparably as one (GILES, 2006:235).

Giles argues that Evangelicals' use of the term 'difference' means that the word has taken on a new and disingenuous meaning:

When in the 1970s it could no longer be claimed that women are 'inferior' to men... evangelicals, determined to maintain the subordination of women, began saying, 'we believe men and women are equal; they simply have different roles'. This sounded perfectly acceptable to modern ears. However, once unpacked, what we have here is deliberately obfuscating language. The only difference that is ever in mind is who is in charge and who is set under them. Men's 'role' is to lead and women's is to obey (GILES, 2006:208).

Further, as Groothuis argues,

the idea that women are equal in their being, yet unequal by virtue of their being is contradictory and ultimately nonsensical... A permanent and comprehensive subordination based on a person's essence is an essential (not merely functional) subordination. In the final analysis, gender hierarchy allows for no meaningful distinction between the person and the position (in GALLAGHER, 2003:165).

In summary, while the traditional Scottish Presbyterian understanding of order within the Trinity is contested, the understanding of Trinity as hierarchical, currently popular with Evangelicals in the United States, is clearly finding some acceptance among Scottish Presbyterians today. This understanding is used to defend and reinstate the traditional interpretation of biblical teaching on female submission as transcultural.

Male Headship, Female submission and the Creation Order

As we have seen, therefore, conservative Evangelical theology argues for a God-man-women 'creation order' in which women and men, although spiritually equal in terms of their redemptive standing before God, are assigned 'different' roles within the church and within the family. This view is given the elevated position of a *creation ordinance* (MACDONALD, 2005:5). The basis of this understanding

begins in the Genesis narrative, where Adam is created first, and Eve is created as a 'helpmeet' for him. While, in this narrative Adam is named by God, Eve is named by Adam, thus, the argument goes, establishing his authority over her (GRUDEM, 2004, DUNCAN, 2008).

Despite the fact that the narrative depicts Eve eating the forbidden fruit first, the Fall (that is the transition of humankind from a state of sinlessness to a state of sin) is usually attributed to Adam. One understanding of this is that 'Adam' in Old Testament text also, in places, means 'humankind'. But the more common understanding is that Adam is the one who really counts simply because he is the man:

Adam had a leadership role in representing the entire human race, a leadership role that Eve did not have. Nor did Adam and Eve together represent the human race. Adam alone represented the human race, because he had a particular leadership role that God had given him, a role Eve didn't share (GRUDEM, 2004:31).

Recent Evangelical re-readings of the creation narrative introduce a new emphasis, which suggest that the eating of the forbidden fruit was preceded by previous error. Eve, it is suggested, erred by taking the fruit without asking her husband; Adam erred by failing to show leadership – male headship - to Eve.

The question is – who makes the decisions in this family? Who is the spokesman? Who wears the trousers in Adam's house? Well if it's Adam, why is the serpent talking to Eve? Here we find an inversion of the created order – the Devil is turning God's good creation upside down. Whereas God created man first and then woman; now Satan is dealing with the woman rather than the man. And...Adam lets this happen. This first family is lacking in male headship – Eve is speaking when she shouldn't because the man isn't speaking when he should.... Sin comes in through the failure of Adam to be the man (DOW, 2006).

The Reformers' understanding of the created order was that the subordination of womankind is rooted in her creation. This was Calvin's view (JENKINS BLAISDELL, 1985), and he saw woman's subordinate role as dictating her roles in church, family and society. Feminist theologians, however, argue that the rulership of Adam over Eve resulted from the Fall and was therefore not part of the original created order (VAN LEEUWEN, 1993).

What is particularly problematic for women in all this is that the idea of biblical manhood and womanhood, and in particular what ‘complementarians’ call the complementarity of the ‘sexes’, tends to assume that a set of traits and roles are advocated for women and men in biblical text, without making explicit what these role distinctions are, or in what sense the sexes are ‘complementary’. There is a ‘common sense’ assumption that these distinctions are clear, making it difficult to construct counter arguments. But feminist theologians and commentators on the sociology of religion have suggested that when we try to define such distinctions – and substantiate them in biblical text – they become somewhat elusive (VAN LEEUWEN, 1993) (STORKEY, 2001). ‘Difference’ boils down to little more than male leadership and female submission. Clearly, the notion of complementarity is grounded firmly in an essentialist understanding of gender, the assumption that masculine and feminine traits are fixed and given, rather than produced and performed. Such reductionism overlooks the processes of gender identity formation and the subjectivities of both biblical interpreters and female and male actors in the social worlds of religious communities.

Another gendered aspect of Christian theology, which feeds directly into this debate, is the imagery of the church as the ‘Bride of Christ’. It is argued that marriage, from the beginning of creation, was a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. Much is made in this discourse of the husband’s function as ‘head’, and this is related directly to the parallel of human and divine relationships: *Now I want you to realise that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.* (1 Corinthians 11 v3 NIV). The husband represents Christ, and the wife represents the church. As hierarchy and lordship are clearly demarcated in the one relationship, so it must be in the other (GRUDEM, 2004). This biblical imagery is one in very frequent usage in pulpit discourse, and the limitations of this allegory are seldom considered. So whilst an emphasis on Christ’s self-giving love for the church might be happily manifest in a husband’s consideration for his wife, the negative aspects of the imagery for women are clear. Further, although Christian theology does not in fact argue that men are like God, or that women find redemption in men, these limitations in the allegory are seldom

made explicit (indeed implicit messages to this effect are communicated), rendering the picture an uncomfortable and compromising one for women.

Some Evangelical writings take this imagery further and use the maleness of God to suggest a romantic relationship between women and God, to construct God as the ideal man, as woman's dream. (For example, *Captivating* (2005) and *The Sacred Romance* (1997) both by John Eldredge).

This image of God-the-Father combines authoritarian and protective elements with tenderness and sensitivity, qualities not normally associated with traditional masculinity. According to scholars who have studied women's consumption of romance fiction, some women are drawn to such idealized images of manhood out of a longing for sensitivity in their own husbands and fathers... Rather than preventing women from relating directly to God... such imagery may enhance and personalize women's relationships with God (PEVEY et al., 1996:183).

While such a conceptualisation would find no support in Calvinistic thinking, such popular writings are read by Evangelical Presbyterian women.

In Calvinist thinking, therefore, the essential dignity and liberty of 'man' which was at the heart of Reformation theology is not, in reality, extended to women, because of her position in the created order. Kuyper, in vaunting such liberty, makes this qualification clear:

No man has the right to rule over another man, otherwise such a right necessarily, and immediately becomes the right of the strongest.... I do not speak of the family, for here the organic, natural ties rule... (KUYPER, 1931:82).

Implications of a 'creation-order' theology

The 'creation order' understanding of humankind is one which has clear implications for the positioning of women within the church, most obviously in the question of ordination. While Christian feminists argue that the Pauline injunctions against women *speaking* (1 Corinthians 14 v 34) in the church and *having authority over men* (1 Timothy 2 v 12) were culturally bound – i.e. Paul accommodating the culture of the day so as not to bring the new faith into disrepute (VAN LEEUWEN, 1993) (PORTER, 2004) – traditionalists argue that the instructions should be understood as

transcultural precisely because they have their root and basis in the 'creation order' (GRUDEM, 2004).

In the Church of Scotland, the ordination of women is now well established, although this is in relatively recent history (1960s) and there is lingering opposition to this from a minority of Evangelical ministers and congregations across Scotland. In the Western Isles, for example, there has, to date, been no ordination of women as ministers.

But in the Free Church of Scotland the question has never been raised. Ironically, there is nothing in the official standards of the Free Church which proscribes women's ordination. What is binding on office-bearers is the Westminster Confession of Faith and this does not address the issue, it being, presumably, outwith the imaginings of 'the divines' at the time of composition. Office-bearers, therefore, do not swear not to ordain women. But such an innovation would still need to be ratified by the General Assembly and no commissioner or presbytery has ever petitioned the General Assembly of the Free Church to consider the ordination of women, even to the lesser offices of elder or deacon. Unlike other questions of biblical interpretation, (for example infant versus adult baptism) clergy within the Free Church insist on characterising the acceptance of women's ordination as a rejection of the authority of biblical text, rather than as a matter of differing interpretation:

[The Church of Scotland] have sold the pass on the question of women's ordination. This is more serious than it sounds because it is a lot more than a question of ecclesiology – it is a question of scripture and its sufficiency and authority... Women's ordination is not the problem – the church overruling scripture is (ROBERTSON, 2004:3/4).

It is, quite simply, out of the question.

As some of the narratives in the study will exemplify, women can and do perform some 'ministries', either in para-church organisations like Women for Mission, or in home Bible studies, and some office-bearers endorse this, albeit calling on a somewhat semantic justification. (She is teaching but not teaching authoritatively. She is not leading but facilitating. She is praying aloud but not leading in prayer.)

This concession does bring short-term fulfilment to women, although the long-term effect may be to contain women's involvement within para-church activity and to perpetuate the status quo within the church.

When the issue of women's marginalisation is raised it is often suggested that women ought not to be seeking 'rights' in the church, but should rather be offering themselves in a spirit of service. Unfortunately, the principle that all should be serving irrespective of office does not negate the problem which arises when the structures and practices of the church actively preclude Christian women from using their gifts in service. Rather, it may serve to compound the sense of frustration felt by those whose gifts go unrecognised and unused.

The insistence of the Free Church of Scotland, and of some congregations within the Kirk, to conform to what they understand to be the 'creation order' has a number of practical consequences in the life of the church in addition to the central question of ordination which, in turn, are problematic for women.

One such is the process of coming into membership. An adherent can 'come forward' at any stage in life, but is most likely to do so in late teens or young adulthood. For a young woman, this means facing, alone, a Kirk Session made up of between 5 and 20 men in an interview situation. If we accept the body of feminist scholarship on gender and power, alongside what is suggested in studies in Presbyterian cultures regarding the unsayableness of personal religion, the implications for women are clear.

Another aspect of the worshiping experience of women which is heavily imbued with patriarchy due to 'creation order' theology is the Eucharist, usually referred to within Scottish Presbyterianism as 'Communion'. In a typical Presbyterian Communion service, a dozen elders (in the Free Church, always men) don dark suits and take up an elevated position (literally and symbolically) at the front of the church. They sit side-on to or facing the congregation for the entire service, although the Communion is not celebrated until the final 20 minutes or so. When the time

comes to 'dispense the elements' i.e. pass the bread and the wine to communicants, some but not all of the elders rise to do this. The way in which the 'dispensing of the elements', is carried out, often suggests not one Body, as Presbyterian doctrine would advocate, but three. The members are served the bread and the wine by elders (never the minister). The elders serve each other, or are served by the minister. The minister is served separately, and usually by another minister. At a time when Christian ideology would suggest that the minds of worshippers would be most focussed on the divine, and that communicants would be conscious of their togetherness as the Body of Christ, the ritual is telling another story, one of gendered position and hierarchy.

Another aspect of the life of the church which is affected by a 'creation order' theology is baptism. Presbyterian churches practise paedobaptism, which they understand to be a New Testament continuation of the Old Testament symbol of male circumcision, inducting infants of believers (now including girls) into the 'visible church'. Despite a tradition which places women as the primary carers for little children, in the moment of baptism that care transfers to the man. Husband and wife approach the font together but it is the accepted practice for the husband, as 'head' of the family and God's representative within the family, to hold the baby while the minister administers the water, and for the husband to take the baptismal vows.

'Creation order' theology has implications for marriage emerging from the ideology of female subordination. The marriage ceremony itself involves the performance of difference. Traditionally Presbyterians did not marry in church (although this has now become the norm), but they *were* married by a minister, either in the home or in a hotel. The vows, traditionally used by all Scottish Presbyterian ministers, and still retained by conservative Presbyterian ministers, derive from the Directory for Public Worship which was adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1645. This document is not prescriptive, but is the closest thing in post-Reformation Presbyterianism to a Common Order. In the marriage ceremony, the groom vows *to be a loving and faithful husband*, while the bride vows *to be a loving, faithful and*

obedient wife. While the Kirk has updated its marriage vows to omit references to wifely obedience (see their 1994 book of Common Order), some variant on this form of words is still standard in the conservative Presbyterian churches in Scotland.

Further, for women with children, there are implications with regard to mothering and working. The view that it is the woman who should remain at home to care for children is not understood as merely traditional or economically prudent. It is ascribed the gravity of a creation ordinance. Thus, for Christian women, mothering and working are set up in opposition in a particularly poignant and powerful way. Closely associated with this is an emphasis on self-sacrifice. An understanding of Christian service as necessarily self-less is one which Porter (2004) suggests is constructed by Evangelicals in gendered ways.

In the understanding of human relationships which subordinates women to men and which associates care and nurture with femaleness, self denial itself finds a gendered expression within Christianity. Service of others is seen as a woman's particular vocation. So, while self-denial is part of Christian identity for men, this is normally applied within the parameters of a socially constructed masculinity. Therefore it produces different consequences than does self-denial for women (PORTER, 2004:61).

Taken to the extreme, this theology has implications for women even in civic life. Piper & Grudem (PIPER and GRUDEM, 1991) argue that a man should never be placed in any situation in which he would find himself sub-ordinate to a woman as this would *invariably violate the essential femininity and masculinity (i.e. the essential nature) of both the woman in authority and the man in subordination* (INGERSOLL, 2003:17). Such notions of essential masculinity and femininity in civic life are grounded in the teachings of Calvin who, for example, disapproved of theatre going because of the moral effect that acting had upon women:

our modern Theatres... have introduced the presence of women on the stage, the prosperity of the Theatre being too often gauged by the measure in which a woman jeopardizes the most sacred treasures God entrusts to her, her stainless name and irreproachable conduct... Too often... the prosperity of Theatres is purchased at the cost of manly character, and of female purity (KUYPER, 1931:75).

If one adheres to a 'creation order' theology as described above, the claims of feminism are problematic. Consequently, discourses within conservative

Evangelical churches tend to set up Christianity and feminism in opposition: *Feminism has now become so widespread that it seems we are now default feminists*, argues Mary Kassian. *To be a committed complementarian requires a work of grace in our own hearts* (COUNCIL-FOR-BIBLICAL-MANHOOD-AND-WOMANHOOD, 2008). Such discourses, alongside the almost eroticising of submission, have the effect of de-feminising women who hold feminist perspectives by setting up an implied contrast between feminism and the conventionally feminine. Thus, in the eyes of those who tend to favour conventional notions of femininity and masculinity feminism is discredited in advance of any engagement with its claims.

Christian feminists would, of course, argue that this dichotomy is a false one (STORKEY, 1985) (VAN LEEUWEN, 1993). They take the basic premises of feminism to be that women are equal with men, that women have been oppressed and marginalised, and that we, women and men, ought to do something about it. This definition sits comfortably with the creation narratives of Genesis 1-3 (equality), with the emerging history of women within the Old Testament (oppression), and with the gospel narratives (repentance and reconciliation). Given this definition, which they acknowledge as a simplistic one, the antithesis between Christianity and feminism is both unnecessary and unbiblical.

But there is a tendency for 'complementarians' to dismiss the work of egalitarian Evangelical scholars with a less than scholarly response. Take this suggestion for example: *Evangelical feminists would deny that they are basing their interpretation of Scripture on the demand of present day culture...but this is a distinct possibility* (MACDONALD, 2005:5). This suggestion that Evangelical feminists are merely adjusting their views to modern prejudices seems somewhat ironic given that feminist scholars claim that what Paul appears to be suggesting is that, in order for the new faith to survive in a patriarchal society, Christian women of his day should accept the wider societal norms then prevailing.

The Bible and the body – doctrinal positions on abortion and clothing

Christian theology is often challenged for its negative view of the body, for its body/mind dualism, and in particular for setting the body, particularly the female body, as the site of sin. It would be naive to assume that the social meanings of Christian body symbolism can be *derived deductively from theology* (MCGUIRE, 1990:289), and yet theology figures as both historically foundational and contemporarily legitimizing in the production of such social meanings.

There has long been opposition from the Christian churches to the practice of abortion, and the Presbyterian churches in Scotland are no exception. The current position of the Free Church of Scotland is that abortion is wrong, *except on the rare grounds of saving the mother's life* (Assembly Acts 2007). The Kirk takes the same view, but adds to the possible exceptions *pregnancy resulting from incest or rape and cases of foetal abnormality* (Assembly Acts 2008). This opposition is despite the fact that abortion is not directly mentioned in any biblical text, though it is thought to have been widely practised in antiquity. In Christian theology there is an emphasis on ensoulment, and the church's historical position on abortion purports to be concerned, not with the bodily existence of the embryo in the womb of the woman, but with the ensoulment of the embryo. From the moment 'body' and 'soul' are joined (which is generally understood to be at conception) the embryo, or the 'unborn child' is understood to be fully human, a divine image bearer; *the notion that God confers the creation of a human being in an analogous act mirroring the role of the male sperm in fertilization* (STOYLE, 2005:115). The act of abortion, therefore, becomes the act of murder. Within Evangelicalism, there is almost universal agreement on 'the sanctity of human life', with even feminist commentators choosing to support the traditional view (STORKEY, 1985).

Women are inevitably disempowered by such a discourse of embryonic rights (STOYLE, 2005), most notably in arenas, such as the General Assembly of the Free

Church of Scotland, where the discussion forum has an exclusively male membership. The decision a woman member might otherwise make about what to do with her own body is thus wrested from her, by men, and that in the name of God. There is a discourse of blame for the evils of abortion, and the object of blame is invariably the woman, and the site of sin her body.

It could be argued that traditional practices in Scottish Presbyterianism, particularly those surrounding public worship, have embodied women in particular ways. First, there is the vexed historical question of head-coverings. Pauline teachings suggest that it is a disgrace for women to pray or prophecy with her head uncovered (1 Corinthians 11), and, while most scholars now interpret such passages as culturally bound, some conservative theologians continue to root this teaching in the god-man-woman creation order. In worship, the argument goes, a woman ought to cover her head as a sign of her submission. Thus, in Scottish Presbyterianism there has emerged a culture in which women attend church hatted, while men, for whom a head-covering would dishonour their headship, hang theirs up at the door. Until the last couple of decades this was the practice in all Free Church congregations, and is still so in most rural ones, and in some congregations of the Kirk. Further, it is a practice still passionately argued for by some church leaders (for example, STEWART, 2008).

Closely linked in practice, although without the same theological foundation, is a general preoccupation with women's dress. Again, up until very recently, acceptable practice in conservative Presbyterian churches dictated that women did not wear trousers in church. This can be understood in different ways. One is the tradition of wearing one's best clothes to worship as a sign of respect for the divine, a tradition in which the predominantly working-class membership of Scottish Presbyterian churches dressed up rather than down for this weekend ritual:

During the week (they)...toiled for long hours and low wages. But on Sundays they were aristocrats, dressed in their finest and rising to the full height of human dignity in intelligent, enraptured worship of their Maker (MACLEOD, 1995:v).

Historically, a women's best clothes would not have included trousers. But there is also the understanding that, in church, women and men must dress in a way which denotes essential difference: *the woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to the man, neither shall a man put on woman's raiment, for all that do so are abomination* (Deuteronomy 22:5 AV). In recent years, and again most notably in city congregations, there has been a trend away from formal dress for worship. But alongside this trend, within Evangelicalism, there has been an increasing discourse about 'modest apparel', with forum discussions debating what is appropriate dress for women. Thus the male 'gaze' is legitimised within Evangelicalism by calls for so-called Biblical standards in dress. Ironically, this sort of preoccupation with women's bodies is in danger of promoting precisely what it purports to abhor: the positioning of women as sex things.

The problem with all this for women is the sense of bodily surveillance that attends the practices of worship. That a woman's bodily appearance in the context of worship is imbued with particular meanings, and that these meanings are policed by men in the name of God, is of huge significance to her identity as a Christian worshipper. Indeed, the act of 'wearing submission' which is suggested by donning a hat for worship is arguably as extreme an enactment of subordinated femininity as the veil itself. Yet the discursive practices at play in such religious communities do seem to persuade women to perform gender to such extremities and to produce their bodies as markers of their compliance.

For the Church of Scotland women who figure in this study, much of the foregoing is historic detail, the position of women, while emerging from the same theologies, being, at an overt level, a relatively liberated one. But for the Free Church women in the study, the issues are all too current. The 'woman question' was played out at a recent General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. The General Assembly of 2004 received overtures regarding the place of women in public worship. What the overtures amounted to, in effect, was an attack on the emerging practices of utilising women's gifts in church services. In some congregations women were delivering children's addresses, praying aloud or conducting the Bible reading during Sunday

worship. This, seemingly, was cause for grave concern. The Assembly was reminded that it is the traditional understanding of the Reformed church that women are to keep silent. There was no debate and a motion that a special committee be set up to study public worship, and specifically the role of women in public worship, was unopposed.

On the one hand it was gratifying to see church leaders acknowledging that the way in which the Free Church positions women IS an issue. (We had been reminded earlier in the evening, without parody, that the FC was the ideal body to reach out to Muslim women because the experience of being a woman in Islam and a woman in the FC is so similar.) On the other hand, the setting up of such a committee seemed retrograde. Historical pronouncements on public worship limit women, in theory, only from preaching or administering the sacraments. This was John Knox's position, yet the Assembly of 2004 was arguably calling for a narrower view even than Knox.

Conclusion

In conclusion I offer a couple of caveats. First, it is problematic to infer that cultural practices such as those described above necessarily emerge directly from the theologies outlined. The relationship between theology and culture might be characterised as a chicken and egg situation. It is all too easy, after all, to pick our theologies to coincide with our prejudices. While on the one hand, given the hermeneutical complexities involved, it is unfair to infer that a prohibition on women's ordination, for example, is misogynist, on the other hand it might be observed that such a position often exists and thrives alongside a wider disregard for women and fear of women's involvement.

The rules that define the church's perimeters are part of its paradoxical character, in so far as rules must always, by their very nature, place some people outside of them. So, when, in turn, those on the margins challenge these rules, the accepted membership feels threatened, because it is those very boundaries that have given them the spiritual security that the people from the margins crave to share (STOYLE, 2005:111).

Secondly, Christian feminists have offered critiques of all the above theologies, and suggested alternative readings and practices, on which I have only touched in passing. I have tended to treat Christian feminism as a cultural entity and Evangelical feminists as a homogenous group when in fact there is a wide range of views held amongst those who would regard themselves as Christian or Evangelical Christian and feminist. However, my thrust is that although alternative feminist theologies exist, they have had little impact on the Presbyterian churches in Scotland, and therefore on the lived experience of the women in the study.

The explorations of the hermeneutics of biblical text which I have offered raises for me a question about the relationship between a Foucaultian notion of discourse as outlined in Chapter Two and practices of biblical interpretation as described here. Certainly, these practices highlight the hegemonic power relationship between interpreter and the community. One could understand such interpretations as are described in this section as evidence of *the underlying capriciousness of language and of the institutions that exploit it* (DETWEILER, 1993:461). At the very least, it seems important to acknowledge the constant themes of text, narrative, language and interpretation which I understand to be at play in the constitution of participants' subjectivities.

In summary, beliefs and practices which would be regarded as bigoted or sexist in a secular context, are understood as being endorsed by God in a religious context (INGERSOLL, 2003), and the right of individuals to hold to such beliefs is understood at the very least to be a necessity of religious liberty, and, more often, a necessity of orthodoxy. Thus

theology has been used to legitimise male dominance, confirmed by a masculine God whose judgement, action and desire for the world has been understood to provide divine confirmation of mastery, subordination and obedience as appropriate patterns of human behaviour (ORR MACDONALD, 2000b:4).

Yet, paradoxically, women make up a large proportion of the membership even of those churches which would appear to be most inhospitable to women, both ideologically and organisationally (PEVEY et al., 1996). This raises the question of how such women make sense of their lived experience in this social world, and how

they produce and maintain a sense of self within the context of Christian patriarchy. How are we to understand the apparent collusion with their own subjection? What processes constitute this and how are these understood by the women themselves? Is acquiescence to and conformity with the favoured *interpretation* of Biblical text achieved through hegemonic processes and, if so, what reciprocities might women enjoy as a result of their collusion? The following chapter takes a closer look at the discursive practices which have emerged from the cultures described in this chapter, and links these to discursive practices within schooling and teacher culture, in order to provide additional lenses through which to examine the narratives.

CHAPTER FIVE

SILENCED LIVES: WOMEN IN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

In a sense, this thesis is premised on the observation that women's voices tend to be quieted in the realms of religion and schooling in Scotland. The material in the previous chapter raises questions about how the women in my study understand and position themselves in relation to such theologies and practices and how they are constructed through them. Are they as heteronomous as it might appear, or do they, as Bartkowski & Read suggest, *creatively negotiate the mandates of their faith to produce religious subcultures that are at once distinctive and flexible* (BARTKOWSKI and GHAZAL READ, 2003:85)?

While we must guard against representing women such as those in this study as a homogenous group, it would be reasonable to observe that the conditions in which they live, work and worship might provide a base for solidarity which in turn might provide a fulcrum for resistance. They might be expected to use femininity as a procedure for subverting male power: *femininity offers a possible procedure for subverting the marginalising mechanisms of power, thereby breaking it up* (BEASLEY, 1999:73). Yet, some feminists (BEASLEY, 1999), harnessing the Foucauldian notion that resistance to power is liberation from identity, would suggest that progress is made for women, not by mobilising their identities, but by resisting identity and thus destabilising power.

Drawing on the foundations set out in Chapter One, on the theoretical framework in Chapter Two and on the material outlined in Chapter Four, therefore, this chapter seeks to bring some key concepts to bear on the question of the silencing of women in school and church. I attempt to investigate ways in which the processes of gender and power are produced and reproduced in and through the historical and theological processes outlined, and to highlight some of the discursive practices through which women are constructed. Links are drawn between the social world of religion, the domestic contexts of family life, and the nature of Primary teaching as work, and

thus suggestions are made for ways of understanding the relationship between gendered religious and work identities.

Gender and orthodoxy

I recently met a young man who had come to Scotland from the USA to study theology. We exchanged ecclesiastical affiliations (he was from the Presbyterian Church of America), and, on hearing mine, he declared “*Our church is just like yours! We believe that Christ is the son of God, that the Bible is the word of God, and that women should not preach!*”

One of the characteristics, it seems, of recent Evangelicalism is the way in which views on gender have come to be regarded as the litmus test of orthodoxy. While Evangelicals cheerfully agree to disagree on matters such as paedobaptism versus adult baptism, alternative views on gender (and indeed on sexuality) are seldom regarded as legitimate, but rather are constructed as ‘compromise’.

The monolithic Protestant traditionalism is... portrayed as a central force on one side of a larger culture war: conservatives (including evangelicals and fundamentalists) versus liberals (including feminists). This polarised view plays into the hands both of those who want to demonize conservative Protestantism and of conservative Protestant ‘traditionalists’ who want to claim that theirs is the only legitimate position within a “biblical” (by which they mean conservative Protestant interpretation of the Bible) worldview (INGERSOLL, 2003:15).

From such polarised thinking emerges a tendency to view feminism as a threat to Christianity. Indeed, within Evangelicalism, feminism has become symbolic of what are understood to be the destructive forces of secularism. Porter noted of Evangelical Presbyterianism in Ireland that

feminism has become so associated with a liberal social agenda that supporting feminism has become synonymous with supporting that modernistic agenda, and to oppose feminism is to oppose the secular drift of society (PORTER, 2002:11).

Church leaders within the Free Church of Scotland (even those regarded as on the ‘left’ wing of the church) hold similar views:

We are in a spiritual war and if we listen to the siren sounds of secular feminism we shall be diverted from our task to spread the glory of God

among the nations (Rev David Meredith, Free Church Message Board, 8/1/2003).

By harbouring and voicing views on gender which run counter to the *status quo*, therefore, the Evangelical Christian woman stands to lose, not just the argument in hand, but her very legitimacy as a woman of faith, and her citizenship of the faith community. The conditions for silencing in this area are apparent.

Family

A further characteristic of recent Evangelicalism is the centrality of the family to their worldview: *family has become a central metaphor for evangelical identity* (GALLAGHER, 2003:xi). *In evangelical culture – beside lesbianism and homosexuality – divorce is the unforgivable sin* (INGERSOLL, 2003:92). A moral panic, it seems, surrounds the perceived decline in family life. Ingersoll describes how even feminist minorities within Evangelicalism are at pains to legitimise their group membership by stressing their family credentials.

Being married and having children is clearly still a badge of honor in this world, but it is also an indication that the person is “safe” and does not represent a threat to the moral order of the community (INGERSOLL, 2003:41).

At the centre of this discourse is an ideology which places the woman, bodily, ‘in the home’, as the ‘homemaker’ whose highest calling is the service of husband and children. This ideology is premised on theological understandings of the ‘created order’, and positions women both *at* and *as* the heart – *the sentimental center* (GALLAGHER, 2003:28) - of the home, ensuring their economic dependence on the household and, in particular, on the male bread-winner. There is a prevailing understanding that this model is both biblical and timeless, and a tendency to privilege some biblical teachings over others in order to promote such an ideal. For example, the epistle of Titus seems to endorse such a conceptualisation:

Likewise, teach the older women to... train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no-one will malign the word of God (Titus 2:3-4 NIV).

This is often cited whilst eliding the more liberating and less feminised portrait of a good woman offered in Proverbs:

She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable and her lamp does not go out at night (Proverbs 31:16-18 NIV).

The preferred ideology relies, not only on such selective privileging of particular biblical texts, but also on a somewhat selective remembering of a past in which, in Protestant Scotland, most women worked long hours on the land, in factories or in domestic service in the homes of the wealthy, and experienced neither the luxury nor the containment of remaining at their own hearths (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a). Indeed it was the very labour of such women that allowed for the relative leisure of more fortunate Scottish women. From this double standard was born the myth of the domestic serenity of the woman-at-home. Gallagher argues (albeit in the context of colonial Evangelical protestant communities in America) that it wasn't until the mid 19th Century and the bourgeois ideology of separate spheres that *those elements of sentiment, piety, and tenderness* (GALLAGHER, 2003:31) which this discourse promotes came to be understood as key characteristics of true womanhood. By the time Virginia Woolf was writing, the construction of the wife and mother as the *Angel of the House* was well established, even within secular life:

She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was a chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it – in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the mind and wishes of others. Above all – and I need not say it – she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty – her blushes, her great grace (Woolf in GRUMET, 1988:186).

The New Testament narrative of Mary and Martha is one often utilised in pulpit discourse. In this story, the sisters are hosting Christ and his followers in their home. Martha is busy with the domestic duties, while Mary chooses instead to sit and listen to Jesus. Martha, annoyed about this, appeals to Jesus to instruct Mary to help her. But his reply vindicates Mary's choice:

"Martha, Martha" the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed... Mary has chosen what is better,

and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41 TNIV).

This narrative has fed into the debate on women’s ‘role’ in home and church and into the duality between the practical and the spiritual in religious discourse. Read in a particular way

the text presents a choice to be made between the spiritual and the material with the correct choice clearly understood as the spiritual option, which consequently devalues material needs and concerns and all those who deal with the material (PORTER, 2004:8).

Such a reading of the text, a narrative otherwise rich with promise as a ‘feminist’ text, results in an impossible ideal for women. Evangelicalism simultaneously instructs women to be the centre of the home, providing materially for men and children, and yet, when they become preoccupied with such materiality, implies that this very preoccupation signals a failure of spirituality.

It is ironic that a church which generally relies on its women as ‘Marthas’ to function in terms of the practicalities of its corporate life (cleaning, church-decoration, child-care, catering, and so forth) should at the same time urge them to be ‘Marys’, prioritising personal prayerful devotion above all else (PORTER, 2004:9).

Even Mary, who chose to learn rather than to serve, is carefully policed in Evangelical readings of the text. Much is made of Mary’s *sitting at the feet of Christ* in this narrative and this is interpreted in terms of her passivity and submissiveness (PORTER, 2004), whilst eliding the possible sense of this picture as the typical cultural attitude of a disciple (see Acts 22:3). An alternative interpretation would be that by sitting at Jesus’ feet Mary was adopting the position of a student to his Rabbi, indicating her zeal to learn, and evoking from Jesus a response which made plain that he encouraged women to be his students: a point also made in the story of his encounter with the Woman of Samaria (John 4: 7-26). Arguably, the church has done much to take from Mary, and from women, the ‘better choice’.

For women Primary teachers the ideology of family and women’s place within it has particular resonance given the ways in which Primary teaching as work has been constructed (ACKER, 1995), as primarily relational and only secondarily pedagogical. *Linked as it is with notions of ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ femininity... the idea of the teacher as mother is powerful and pervasive (SIKES, 1998:88).* As with

family bonds, the teacher-child relationship is constructed around regard (love?) for the individual child rather than on a teacher-learner model. Taylor *et al* found that over two-thirds of Scottish teachers interviewed (and their study included Secondary Teachers less associated with the feminised model) defined their commitment in terms of relational involvement with the child (TAYLOR *et al.*, 2001). Similarly Nias noted that most teachers were unable to articulate what they liked about teaching other than in terms of relationships with individuals or groups (NIAS, 1988). Steedman turns this Froebelian parallel of the teacher as the *mother made conscious* on its head, and argues, rather, that good motherhood, in recent history, has been modelled on teaching:

It may be that the lineaments of modern good mothering were developed by women who were not the natural mothers of children in their care, and because they were paid to do so... The classroom may be one of the places where the proper relationship between mothers and children has been culturally established (STEEDMAN, 1985:13).

But whatever the origin of the association, it seems that being a teacher of young children is very much like being a homemaker and mother. Both find a certain acceptance as appropriate for women within Christian communities, and both provide the conditions for isolation: *Teaching young children must always be, in some way or other, a retreat from general social life and from fully adult relationships...* (STEEDMAN, 1985:8). This relates back to the notion of the private space of the classroom as the site through which the 'naturalness' of the woman teacher is constructed (STEEDMAN, 1985) and through which teaching becomes an alternative form of domesticity in the private sphere (DILLABOUGH, 1999), denying women teachers public space, power and autonomy (TAMBOUKOU, 2000).

Work

Max Weber's theory of the "Protestant Ethic" (WEBER, 1958) is particularly associated with Calvinism (MARSHALL, 1980). Weber posited that *one important precondition for the development of modern capitalism was the independent development of a certain methodological attitude towards life* (MARSHALL,

1980:265), and he traced this attitude to the doctrines of ascetic Protestantism, and in particular to the Calvinistic concept of ‘calling’. This, and the associated emphasis on the morality of thrift, are often cited as key contributors to ‘the spirit of capitalism’ in the West. While the influence of religious ideals on economic development is contested (TAWNEY, 2003, MARSHALL, 1980), this leaves unaffected the point which is of particular interest for this study, namely, the Reformation view of work as sacred when dedicated to God, a view emerging from New Testament writings:

and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus... Servants, obey in all things your masters... in singleness of heart, fearing God; And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ (Colossians 3:17-24 AV).

While Weber drew on illustrations from English Puritanism rather than from Scottish Presbyterianism (TAWNEY, 2003), these religious cultures had Calvinism in common, and his argument resonates with attitudes to work still current within Scottish Presbyterianism, and perhaps also within the wider Scottish community, shaped as it is by its religious past (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a).

What Weber was arguing was that Calvinism produced a “spirit” which contributed to the social conditions which in turn produced a class of merchants and bankers who rationalised both the means of production and the flow of finance (MACLEOD, unpublished:1).

Weber argued that, as a result of the church’s teaching on work, Protestant workers showed particular dedication to their various occupations, regarding work as a ‘calling’ to Christian service, irrespective of its context, and, in turn, conceptualising success and prosperity in the workplace as an indication of God’s blessing. Work within secular society, therefore, was constructed as equally sacred to work within the church, and, further, work was understood as a moral rather than a merely economic pursuit. Such a view of work confers dignity on the worker, and ascribes moral turpitude to the ‘idle’: *If a man will not work, he shall not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10 NIV).*

There is a strong resonance between such a conceptualisation of work and discourses surrounding the work of Primary teachers.

Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship... All of these ideals are what we teach our children and must embody ourselves as teachers in order to be good role models... taking pride in your work, taking ownership of your work area, loyalty in attendance, accountability, and always striving to improve abilities learn new skills and take on broader responsibilities. To me, this sums up the work ethic. (TURASKY, 2004:4-5).

But despite the work ethic and its roots in protestant religion, paid work is problematic for modern Scottish Presbyterian women, constructed as it is in opposition to home and mothering, the central metaphor for female Christian identity. The dignity which the ethic confers on the worker is associated closely with paid work, and does not extend to the labours of home-making. While work in the public sphere

liberates, through personal dignity, creative production, freeing of aptitude and capacity, economic independence, the community of sharing a common task, and the engagement of body, mind and soul... the effort of domestic labour [is] undervalued, sentimentalised or disregarded (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:354).

Yet paradoxically, Christian discourses surrounding work in the home tend to ignore the dullness, tedium and fatigue associated with such work and instead present it as the *maudlin sine qua non of female fulfilment* (Orr MACDONALD, 2000a:354).

In a sense, Primary teaching as work draws together these paradoxical elements:

Teaching is probably the best example of the ambiguities inherent in all paid work performed by women. Their qualifications for doing such work at all have usually rested on what they were thought to know and be able to do 'naturally'. This often meant no more than an extension of what they were in the habit of doing anyway... (MILLER, 1996:2).

Primary teaching is both paid work, in which the protestant psyche invests as a moral calling, and domestic maternal labour to which a doctrine of separate spheres calls Christian women. In this way, the liberating possibilities of work outside the home are thwarted.

Submission

The doctrine of female submission is premised, as we have seen, on 'creation order' theology – the man is head of the woman just as Christ is head of the church. Men

are to exercise loving leadership, while women practise gentle submission.

Evangelical authors argue that women will find “liberation” in a patriarchal family structure because they need not concern themselves with taking final responsibility for domestic decisions (BARTKOWSKI and GHAZAL READ, 2003:74). Within Evangelical discourse, this crude hierarchy accommodates itself to contemporary societal ideologies by emphasising the willingness, even pleasure, of a woman’s submission, and the reciprocity of submission, to such an extent that it is sometimes difficult to read such texts without a sense of the erotic (see SCHAEFFER, 1975). Indeed, C S Lewis made explicit this sense of wifely submission: *at some level consent to inequality, nay, delight in inequality, is an erotic necessity* (LEWIS, 2000:259). Some women, he went on to argue, are

so fostered on a defiant idea of equality that the mere sensation of the male embrace rouses an undercurrent of resentment. Marriages are thus shipwrecked. This is the tragic-comedy of the modern woman; taught by Freud to consider the act of love the most important thing in life, and then inhibited by feminism from that internal surrender which alone can make it a complete emotional success. Merely for the sake of her own erotic pleasure, to go no further, some degree of obedience and humility seems to be (normally) necessary on the woman’s part (LEWIS, 2000:259-260).

Numerous manuals on Evangelical life, particularly those addressed to women, confirm this association between wifely submission and successful sexual intimacy:

La Haye (1968:61) describes the husband as “the instigator” of sex and the wife as “the receiver”; in addition, he graphically contrasts the “titanic explosion” of the male orgasm with that apparently experienced by women – “a warm sense of gratification and satisfaction” (see also LaHye 1968:63-65). Using remarkably similar language, Elisabeth Elliot (1976:59) contends that “the physical structure of the female would tell us that woman was made to receive, to bear, to be acted upon, to complement, to nourish (BARTKOWSKI, 2001:40).

Submission is characterised, therefore, not as passivity but as an active strategy.

Gallagher argues that *women understand the ideal of submission to husbands not so much as compliance with an immutable gender hierarchy but as an extension of their submission to God* (GALLAGHER, 2003:10). By practising submission, women locate themselves *at the center of a tradition in which personal sacrifice is the door to greater good* (GALLAGHER, 2003:163). This resonates with *the paradox of*

surrender and control so deeply ingrained in evangelicalism (Griffith (1997) in INGERSOLL, 2003:4).

Further, within the marital relationship, wifely submission is reportedly experienced by women not only as liberating, but even as empowering. This notion of submission as empowerment is one which is current in the Free Church of Scotland. Take, for example, Rev Iain D Campbell's weekly column in the *Stornoway Gazette* (17/07/08):

The New Testament is insistent that there is a headship which is the preserve of the men, and a submission which is proper for the ladies. That has nothing to do with male chauvinism or misogyny. Quite the opposite: it is a recognition of the fact that women have gifts which they should be free to develop without having to channel them in directions which are unwarrantable according to the Bible... The order of the New Testament is not a put down – it is a liberating of women from the demands of ministry and of church oversight to serve in other ways.

It is argued that women re-work and re-shape this doctrine in such a way that they create for themselves spaces of autonomy; that submission, somehow, really is freedom. *They argue that what looks like powerlessness on the outside has its own processes of empowerment* (INGERSOLL, 2003:3). This is done, in part, by substituting the notion of 'yielding' for the notion of 'obedience'. In this way

conservative evangelical wives introduce agency – the free ability to act – into the very process of subordinating themselves to their husbands. Wives act with intent and personal responsibility even as they lay these things aside (GALLAGHER, 2003:164).

This understanding reflects the 'creation order' argument that women are equal in essence but subordinate in function. But it also appears, paradoxically, to be about men's weakness or, at least, their moral shortcomings:

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives (1 Peter 3:1-2 NIV).

Women, it seems, are called on to rescue men from the ambiguity that allegedly surrounds masculinity in post-modern societies, not by persuasion, but by the performance of silent submission. *Not inconsequentially, the practical outcome of submitting to husbands is a sense of containing men's sexuality and keeping*

husbands both happy and involved at home (GALLAGHER, 2003:10). Thus women use their agency to surrender control. Power, residing deep in the individual psyche, proceeds, in this context, from the bottom up, in ways reminiscent of Foucault's illustration of capillary power (FOUCAULT, 1975).

Such a discourse of paradoxical empowerment in submission might have the effect of marginalising women within Christian communities who do not practise wifely submission, by rendering their counter arguments unnecessary. If women experience submission as liberation and empowerment, what more need be said? Why offer resistance? In this way, it may be the feminist voices, rather than the submissive voices, which are ultimately silenced.

Similar discourses of self-denial are well documented in studies of Primary teacher cultures (ACKER, 1995) (MACDONALD, 2004) (HARGREAVES, 1994) (MILLER, 1996) and resonate strongly both with the sense of teaching as mothering and with the sense of work as a moral labour, a calling. Part of the teacher's consciousness, it seems, is about eschewing, not only her own needs, but also her own judgement, for what is perceived to be the 'greater good'. Thus self-denial on the part of women is a core element in the hegemonic processes at work in both church and school.

Visuality and visibility

If women are to be silent in church, then women attend church to be seen and not heard, and where that is so, that seeing takes on a certain particularity. Since early adulthood (although I have only recently reflected on it, and am only now attempting to articulate it) being-looked-at-ness in the context of church attendance has been a source of discomfort. If we understand the social dynamics of patriarchy to be worked out in part through the apparatus of 'the male gaze', this discomfort merits some analysis.

The notion of 'the male gaze' is premised upon visibility as the acculturation of sight. In other words *vision is cultural as much as biological and how we acquire, interpret and transform ocular data is always contingent on the cultural and historical context of the observant subject* (MACDONALD, 2009:4). In particular, feminist analyses of vision have constructed practices of looking (mostly at women by men, but also at women by themselves and by other women) as expressions and enactments of patriarchal power. In such critiques, not only is the male gaze *a masculine position which is to look actively, possessively, sexually and pleasurably, at women as objects* (Rose in MACDONALD, 2009:12), it also signifies a relationship of power, as described in Berger's classic work:

Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object and most particularly an object of vision: a sight (BERGER, 1972:47).

Thus, vision in this context can be understood as a discursive practice through which *the experience of being watched encourages women to be conscious of themselves and invest in their bodies as the expression of self* (HOWSON, 2004:57).

As described in the previous chapter, a sense of bodily surveillance attends the practices of Presbyterian worship for women. While this is bound up in the theologically legitimized practices of clothing (for example head-covering), the problem is more profound than this. There is something in the very bodily presence of women in church which is different from the presence of men. The ways of seeing women are different. This difference goes beyond the physicality and dominance of space usually associated with hegemonic masculinity (CONNELL, 1995), and the oft-cited particularities of inhabiting a female body (HOWSON, 2004). In the context of worship in Evangelical Presbyterian settings, where the 'silence' of women remains a necessity of orthodoxy, the possibilities for the female body are limited in additional ways. While the embodiment of men holds the promise of power, be it the power of the Word (preaching), of church office, or merely the power of place in the God-ordained 'creation order', the possibilities for the female body are limited to the ocular – to be seen, to see oneself being seen, and to see others. In addition, within Evangelical cultures the female body is a 'troubled

body', conceived as it is as the site of 'sin', particularly those regarded as most heinous, those of adultery or of abortion, and further as an object of temptation and therefore a symbol of moral jeopardy for men. *In public spaces where the female body is potentially transgressive, the male gaze operates as a disciplining mechanism that encourages docility* (HOWSON, 2004:58).

These realities, bound up with the cultural practices of dress for worship, and confirmed perhaps by the relative ocular poverty of the built ecclesiastical environment in Presbyterian Scotland (MACDONALD, 2002), with its spaces of *minimal aesthetic* (MACDONALD, 2000:9), render attendance at church something of a 'cat walk' experience for women, ...*women are obliged to produce their bodies as adequate and acceptable spectacle, as objects external to self* (HOWSON, 2004:56). Indeed, the traditional practices of reception at worship services make this increasingly so. The practice of 'being on the door' is one where elders are stationed in the church vestibule to greet worshippers as they arrive, to guard the collection plate and, in general, to oversee and protect the endeavours of the church. This means that church attenders are seen (and watched) approaching the church, and walking across the vestibule. What is the likely bodily conduct for a woman in this context, given that her (perhaps sub-conscious) awareness of her body as the subject of scrutiny means that she tends to *avoid meeting the gaze of others (particularly men) in public spaces* (HOWSON, 2004:58)? Might such circumstances incline her to look away, to look down, and in so doing both adopt a submissive attitude, and facilitate the uninterrupted and unchallenged gaze of the watcher? Thus the use of physical space within church buildings produces particular relations of gender (LEFEBVRE, 1991).

There are things to be said also about visibility and women teachers, particularly about women as watchers, what Steedman refers to as *authoritative watchfulness* (STEEDMAN, 1985:12). Steedman argues that the woman Primary teacher's role is one of constant physical presence in the classroom with children, and that is particularly manifest in their constant attention to children, their watchfulness.

...the teacher watches, enables, knows when to interest but not to interfere... the teacher is part of the environment....she is there – it is her watchful and

surveillant presence which facilitates...she is passive; the child is an active body (WALKERDINE, 1990:119).

Paradoxical as it may appear, while *visuality* acts as mechanism of domination over Christian women in church and school, *visibility* (or its lack) operates in similar ways. In her work with women in Northern Ireland, Porter highlights the anomaly through which women are often regarded as the back-bone of the church, boosting church attendance, and beavering away behind the scenes, despite their exclusion from its structures of power. Unsurprisingly, she found that women in these communities feel undervalued and *excluded from full participation and personhood* (PORTER, 2004:117).

The historical exclusion of women from public offices in Presbyterian churches, and their ongoing exclusion within Evangelical Presbyterianism, has clear implications for their silencing and invisibility. This, as we have seen, extends beyond structures to the cultures which emerge from them. For example, the injunction that women *keep silence in the churches* has traditionally been taken literally to mean that women are to be prevented from participation in public prayer at Prayer Meetings. This practice is now contested and most congregations of the Kirk, and some in the Free Church, do indeed allow the participation of women. Such innovation, however, emerges alongside changes in structure. Traditionally within Scottish Presbyterianism, the minister 'called' on men to pray. He would announce a time of prayer and list 4 or 5 names of male members present. Those men 'put up' to pray would then 'lead' the congregation in prayer in the order indicated. However, congregations which have opted to include women have simultaneously introduced more informal 'open' prayer meetings, where unnamed individuals, women and men, choose, on their own initiative, to pray aloud. The rationale offered for open prayer meetings is inevitably the need to include women. No congregation in the Free Church has retained the traditional format and 'called' on women by name to lead in prayer. This is an example of a deep reluctance to grant visibility to women. Even where included in prayer meetings women are not included on the same terms and with the same status as men have traditionally been.

There are similar issues with the practice of 'precenting'. The precentor (literally, the one who sings before) is the term used for the person who leads the *a capella* psalm-singing. The precentor stands in the lectern facing the congregation. (Traditionally, he was there to 'give out the line' in a time when the congregation would have been unable to read the words. The precentor would sing the line and the congregation would repeat it after him. This form is still used in Gaelic psalmody.) The precentor starts the verse and the congregation join in, following the pitch and pace of the precentor. This role has almost always been performed by men, although few would attempt any theological justification for this. In the rare exceptions where women take up this role, the role is restructured to minimise its visibility (and, by implication, perhaps, its status). Therefore, *being male still equates with public displays of faith and influence, while being female equates with a more private, supportive expression of faithfulness* (JULE, 2008:70).

The discourse around Evangelicalism and sexuality also confirms the woman's position as object of the male gaze. There is a tendency to assume that men are made vulnerable by their own hypersexuality, and that women are somehow responsible for managing this, and for preventing the potential moral downfall of men. This has two main consequences for the ways in which women are required to produce their own bodies within Evangelical communities. First, women in general are to dress 'modestly' in public, thus reducing the potential temptation for men. Secondly, a married woman is to strive to remain sexually attractive to her husband, in order to channel his desire appropriately: [Evangelical] *manuals for women provide detailed grooming prescriptions, beauty tips, and body management advice that evangelical women can employ to attract-and perhaps reign in-their husbands' wandering eyes* (BARTKOWSKI, 2001:41).

The problems for women consequent on such constructions are evident. First, she is required to turn the male gaze on herself, to become the surveyor (BERGER, 1972), to envisage herself being looked at, and produce her body accordingly. Secondly, she is encouraged to evaluate her own worth in terms of her desirability as the object of the male gaze, and therefore to attribute to her own deficiency in this respect any

infidelity (whether in thought or in act) on the part of her husband. Such women must *maintain a close surveillance of their own bodily and sexual practices in order to appease their man's virtually boundless desire* (BARTKOWSKI, 2001:41).

In schools too, unpromoted Primary teachers are those who serve behind the scenes, life behind the classroom door being one of relative invisibility.

My narrative is about another place, almost another country, where I hide myself from view, like Lucy Snowe was unseen, roll myself into a dormouse ball, yet expend vast passion in the classroom (STEEDMAN, 1985:17).

The discourses surrounding the teacher emphasise *the private space of the classroom and the individuality of the teacher (a model which is essentially feminised – one woman, one classroom, the Foebelian mother made conscious)*... (MACDONALD, 2007:130). The classroom becomes *the private space of silence and isolation, where women... found themselves enclosed within boundaries...* (TAMBOUKOU, 2000:466). The domesticity of classroom life is confirmed by what teachers do there – the performance of nurture and care: *we consign primitive feeling, passionate commitments, to domesticity...* (GRUMET, 1988:181). Even within the microcosm of individual schools, there is a tendency for teachers and promoted staff to create and police a distance between each other (MACDONALD, 2004) which in turn perpetuates the marginalisation and invisibility of unpromoted staff. Thus, the Primary teacher's distance from the spaces of policy-making creates the conditions for silencing.

It could be argued that the education system in Scotland is the site on which women have historically achieved most visibility given the ease of access to the teaching profession for women. Further, education has itself disrupted the unequal structure of gendered relationships and has improved the position of women in the public world: *women seeking to reinvent themselves find in education the transitional space that is essential for reflection upon themselves and their lives* (TAMBOUKOU, 2000:475). However, the feminisation of Primary teaching is produced through a relationship of women with education which positions them on the margins. While women are at the heart of Primary schooling, their relationship with education as an establishment is problematic. Although the schooling of little children may not

generally be regarded as academia (and that in itself is symbolic), it is at the very least the portal to the academy. But the academy, it is argued, is itself institutionally male (STANLEY, 1997). Mental labour is itself constructed as masculine and women are constructed symbolically as that which stands in opposition to rationality (DILLABOUGH, 1999), as the ontological outsiders of the academic establishment.

Speaking Out

Better to live on a corner of the roof than to share a house with a quarrelsome wife (Proverbs 25:24 NIV).

Many elements in Christian teaching and cultures combine to conceptualise silence as desirable in women and thus construct women's voices as illegitimate. *Quietness is related to [a woman's] very God-created nature and, in turn, appeals to the God-created nature in man* (Getz in BARTKOWSKI, 2001:49). A woman's beauty is first in her purity, and next in her quietude:

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight (1 Peter 3:3-4 NIV).

In this way women's arguments tend to be silenced by rendering immaterial what they actually say. If the speaking itself is illegitimate, so then is the hearing. In declaring a political or emotional position, a woman places herself in a particular place of vulnerability, being already located in a position of structural disadvantage. When women attempt to speak out, powerful (male) respondents tend to act as though they are the victims and the woman the perpetrator of an act of aggression or domination. It is as if speaking out were demonstrative of masculinity, and keeping quiet demonstrative of femininity (JULE, 2006). *Women in Christian settings are... often criticized as "self-promoting"* (INGERSOLL, 2003:78) and the woman's voice tends to be heard as aggressive, no matter her subject or her tone.

Evangelical men are rehearsed into the role of performer; while evangelical women are rehearsed into the role of silent audience member. Women's silence demonstrates to others and to the women themselves a devoutness to God, as seen in their ability to be supportive. Their silence is their way of being good (JULE, 2008:72).

Or, as Promise Keeper speaker, Ed Cole, put it: *Men are headliners, women are fine print people* (Cole in BARTKOWSKI, 2001:42). Thus women remain relatively silent, and men continue to dominate adopting *the ruling-class style that assumes women simply do not count in big matters, and can be dealt with by jocular patronage at other times* (CONNELL, 1985:187).

Similarly, in Scottish Primary schools, women teachers become acculturated into keeping their own counsel, even where they are in strong disagreement with management on professional matters affecting their work and relationship with children (MACDONALD, 2004). The Primary teacher is *discursively positioned as one who nurtures and delivers but seldom decides* (MACDONALD, 2007:135).

Women teachers are silenced also in terms of their voice within their own classrooms by recent discourses surrounding 'behaviour management'. For example, a recent publication aimed at student and probationer teachers caricatures the woman Primary teacher in the person of *Mrs Blitzkrieg* who believes that *children must be controlled* and who counsels *Don't smile until Christmas* (HOOK, 2004:21). The caricature is pictured wearing a hair-bun, glasses on a chain around her neck, and an overall of the type women teachers wore in the mid-20th century. The author's aim, clearly, is for readers to distance themselves from this figure. There is nothing new in this.

Connell commented on the phenomenon a quarter of a century ago: *The contradiction it creates in teaching is registered in the creation of derogatory comic stereotypes of women teachers: the rigid spinster school-marm, the tweedy hockey-mistress, and so on* (CONNELL, 1985:153). What is remarkable is its persistence. Thus the control of children is associated with a distorted femininity, by portraying an almost witchlike figure, a transgressive body, the frustrated 'spinster' who, it is implied, mistreats the children in her care. Such a discourse of women teachers as tyrants is reminiscent of Grumet's treatment of the women teacher as simultaneously the oppressed and the oppressor (GRUMET, 1988) who suspends nurturance to adopt control and for whom that dissonance remains unresolved. Women teachers are expected to control children but to do so in a nurturing manner without expressing anger or aggression because *authority, in our society, is felt to be masculine; to assert it is to undermine one's femininity* (CONNELL, 1985:153).

Their inevitable failure to be at one and the same time both controlling and nurturing has implications both for their professionalism and for their femininity. But the calling to nurture is ultimately bound up in the necessity for gentleness and quietude.

In both contexts, church and school, speaking out is constructed as divisive. Church unity is often cited as a reason for maintaining the *status quo* in terms of women's participation, and, in schools, women tend to construct identities in which they choose peace-making over resistance (MACDONALD, 2004) (MACDONALD, 2007).

There is a link between the silencing of women and their embodiment which is highlighted in the work of Simone De Beauvoir. She argues that the illegitimising of a woman's voice begins in her embodiment:

In the midst of an abstract discussion it is vexing to hear a man say 'you think thus and so because you are a woman'; but I know that my only defence is to reply 'I think thus and so because it is true.' Thereby removing my subjective self from the argument. It would be out of the question to reply 'And you think the contrary because you are a man', for it is understood that the fact of being a man is no peculiarity (DE BEAUVOIR, 1949:15).

Porter reports that Evangelical women in Ireland articulated the difficulties faced in choosing to stay within institutions with which they had historical and faith connections and yet which they experienced as oppressive (PORTER, 2002). And yet she also found a certain defensiveness among women with regard to the very practices through which they were marginalised and a deference to those in church leadership. The question is often asked of myself and others, 'Why do you stay?'. As Ingersoll pointed out, *the option of "just leaving" doesn't make sense in this world*, (INGERSOLL, 2003:11) in which membership is at the core of a sense of self and of deeply held convictions.

Of course, many women do leave such churches. Yet this, the strongest statement they can make, is also the one that ultimately silences and excludes them absolutely. In schools too, counter-hegemonic voices are silenced (at least within the immediate

context) by decisions to move on, as evidenced by the teaching background of the women who write about teachers' lives and work.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the processes and practices through which religious communities set up spaces of resistance to, and protection from, what they understand to be the corrosive elements of secular society. The hegemony of these processes and practices, in many instances, serves to silence and contain women. Moreover, parallels can be drawn between these and similar processes in Primary schooling. The literature paints a picture, therefore, of women as silenced by the powerful ideologies and processes of power associated with Presbyterian religion. In addition, we see women as both central to, but exploited by, the patriarchal family unit and central to the delivery of schooling but marginalised by the processes which control it. Thus, discourses that inscribe various behaviours on the body through practices and relations come together in the institutions of religion and schooling to produce women as marginal and silent. Such silencing, of course, is not absolute but relative, just as power is not absolute but dependent on processes of conformity and resistance.

The above discussion heightens the puzzle of the seeming conformity of women in these contexts, and their apparent collusion in the processes which marginalise them. How do we read this as anything other than subjugation? How might we retain the sense of women as agentic actors in their social worlds, and of their faith as a personal resource, as space for self-actualisation. Why do they remain silent? To unlock this conundrum I offer, in Part Two, the Life History narratives of six women. All are (or were) Primary teachers in Scotland, and all are members of Presbyterian churches. I conclude Part Two with my own narrative. Analysis and discussion is offered in Part Three.

CHAPTER SIX

NARRATIVES

CARRON'S STORY

Biographical overview

Carron was born around 1958 in the north-east of Scotland where her father was the Free Church of Scotland minister in a small parish, in Inverness-shire. Her mother worked within the home and parish in her role as the minister's wife, having herself been a minister's daughter. Carron was the middle child of 3 daughters. She spent her Primary school years here until around 1970 when her father accepted a 'call' to the Free Church in a town in west central Scotland where Carron then attended secondary school. In 1975, Carron matriculated at the University of Edinburgh, graduating 3 years later with a degree in modern languages. She went on to do a Post-graduate Certificate in Secondary Education at Moray House College of Education, and taught modern languages in secondary school from 1979-1982.

Around 1983, at the age of 24, Carron married Mark, a student at the Free Church of Scotland College in Edinburgh. In 1984, Carron and Mark moved to the West of Scotland where Mark was ordained and inducted to a Free Church congregation on the outskirts of Glasgow. Their first child was born that same year, and they had two more children within the next 5 years.

Around 1990, Carron and her family moved to a large town in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, under the auspices of the Free Church Mission Board. They lived there for around six years, during which time Carron worked within the home caring for their children, and also did some voluntary work teaching English as a second language, while Mark was involved in church-planting and ministry.

Around 1996, partly due to Mark's ill health, Carron and her family returned to Scotland, and lived initially in the south-east. Carron attended a Secondary-to-Primary conversion course at St Andrew's College of Education, Bearsden, in order to qualify as a Primary teacher. Unable to get work in the Primary sector, she then taught in a college of further education in the west of Scotland.

Around 1998, Mark accepted a 'call' to a Free Church of Scotland congregation in a new-town in central Scotland, and the family moved there. Carron worked for the local council for a time doing long-term Primary supply, then took up various part-time positions as a Learning Support teacher, securing a full-time permanent position in Learning Support, around 2001. Around 2007, Mark, further troubled with ill health, resigned from his charge and the family moved from the manse in which they had been living to a house in a near-by town. At the time of the interviews, Carron's eldest child, having graduated with a degree in Religious Studies, was completing a post-graduate certificate in Primary education, while the other two were both in Higher Education.

I interviewed Carron twice, first in August 2007 when the interview lasted one hour and 48 minutes, and again in April 2008 when the interview lasted two hours and seven minutes.

At School – Life As A Woman Teacher

Carron explained her choice to teach (initially in secondary) thus:

I don't think I gave it a lot of thought. I was one of those people who loved school; I loved studying and languages. I just wanted to teach.

I asked her whether she had considered alternative careers:

I didn't. I mean in those days we didn't think of a range of things. I mean you went into nursing or teaching. I don't regret it though...

Her siblings had also followed this pattern, one going into Primary teaching, and the other working as a care assistant in a home for the elderly, although both now work in further education. Her mother's work experience had been similarly restricted, more so as she didn't work outwith the home after marriage:

She had trained as a nanny and worked in a private nursery. She had started training for nursing but was totally unsuited to it – her father thought she should go in for nursing.

Having gained experience of integrating with younger children, Carron felt that she need not restrict herself to her original choice of secondary teaching:

I discovered that, although I love languages, it's not all I'm able to teach, you know... When I was out there (South Africa) I decided I wasn't going back to Secondary. For one thing, with languages you've really got to keep them up. I hadn't any opportunity to do that. But by then I was used to younger children, working with them and playing with them.

Despite conforming to a culturally defined norm that girls choose only between nursing or teaching, Carron insists that this is not a source of regret in retrospect, but that it is a 'choice' she would make again. The fact that she perceived her choice to be so limited, even in the mid seventies, when social attitudes to gendered norms were changing in the wake of second wave feminism, is perhaps reflective of the way traditional gendered norms lingered within evangelical Presbyterian communities in Scotland. Further, to admit to regret in the choice of one's life career, especially in middle-age or beyond, might be somehow diminishing, implying as it does, waste or failure of aspiration with no opportunity of redress or compensation.

Carron's attitude to Initial Teacher Education was mixed. She appeared not to hold her Secondary training at Moray House in high esteem but had a more positive view of the Primary conversion course:

I actually really enjoyed the course – it was mostly school placement. There was an assumption that you were already a teacher and had come from the classroom, and to a certain extent that was true. You were used to standing up in front of children. But Primary teaching is a very different ball game. I think I learned most on the job, but that would have been the case anyway, even if you had had a year's training or 4 years' training.

Carron thus displays a high view of experiential learning, seeing the main value of her conversion course as being the high proportion of placement involved, and believing that Primary teaching is something for which only practice and experience can adequately prepare.

Carron expresses a preference for Learning Support teaching over classroom teaching:

This has allowed me develop my own area of specialism within Primary. I think, also, I am more aware of the needs of children both behaviour-wise and learning-wise. A lot of these children are working on IEPs and they do seem to respond better to me...some of them just don't manage in class. It's very difficult because of the gap between their ability and the class, and it's difficult for teachers to manage. We have a lot of support systems but we have children who could really do with someone sitting with them all day....I have found it rewarding...

Carron regards empathy with children as being at the core of her job, especially her current role in Learning Support.

I think I am also more aware of the needs of children behaviour-wise and learning-wise...you need to know why they are behaving the way they are.....Its not about giving them an education but just getting them to talk to you and to listen and relate to other children.

She lays great store by the skills of understanding challenging behaviour and managing it in a positive way:

And I think these children, if you don't know them and you don't have any rapport with them, its difficult to manage them.... You know you have got to work very hard at what works for them.

She appreciates the way in which her current role allows her to build up a relationship with children over several years, from when they first benefit from Learning Support in Primary two or three until they leave the Primary. As a result, she also develops relationships with the parents, sometimes finding herself in an almost pastoral role:

Yes, a lot of the parents... would be quite concerned about their children, and you are trying to reassure them or give them ways of helping their child... there is a lot of looking at outside agencies as well, social work, wondering what help we can get.

Working closely and intensely with children in this way may mean that there does not arise for Carron the same tensions between nurture and control as are experienced by teachers in whole-class settings.

Carron's understanding of the Primary teacher's role, therefore, is first caring, social and pastoral; and secondly educational. For her, working as a Learning Support teacher promotes such a construction in several ways. First, working with the same children over several years allows for the development of close bonds and supportive relationships, not only between teacher and pupil, but also between teacher and

parent. Secondly, working with children on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups, fosters caring relationships of a more intimate nature than those within a whole-class setting. Finally, as a Learning Support teacher, Carron often finds herself working with those children whose social and emotional needs are the greatest. Thus working in Learning Support allows for the development of strategies both in the management of behaviour through empathy, and strategies to support children cognitively, which in turn allow Carron to develop a professional identity which she and others can regard as a 'specialism', and from which certain advantages of professional autonomy ensue. Indeed, Carron describes a considerable degree of autonomy in her work with children with Learning Support needs:

I have never felt under pressure. I do set targets for children and I would generally be the one to suggest it and teachers just generally agree with me. To be honest, I think teachers in the classroom are so busy they are quite happy for me to make these decisions.

Related to her sense of autonomy is her preference for solving problems on her own terms:

I've felt the support was there when I needed it. But I very rarely call on anyone. I've called on senior management a couple of times for a little boy who has dreadful tantrums. But I actually find bringing someone else into it doesn't help. Once I have a rapport I am better to manage myself... I go home every night and think What can I do? How can I change this? What can I try?

She does, however, express some frustration at the way in which Learning Support work is valued in terms of overall school attainment:

Our (acting Head Teacher) ... was collating all the tests results, and when she would ask me I would give her and she would say "Well these don't count for the league tables". But for some children getting level A in P7 is a huge achievement.... Yes and on the back of our reports it says that most children should achieve level A by end of Primary Three and I have parents coming in who are upset that they haven't achieved level A and the child is working really hard, but they are very slow learners with significant difficulties, and there is just no way we can get them through that.

In Carron's lived experience, therefore, her sense of autonomy is closely tied to the particularity of her work as a Learning Support teacher. As a relative expert in learning difficulties, she is inscribed with a specialism which means teachers and management allow her to make decisions for children's learning as she sees fit.

Further, despite the frustrations associated with having the achievements of her pupils undervalued by a system which prizes particular constructions of 'attainment', such an emphasis means that Carron, as a Learning Support teacher, tends to be exempt from pressures to test in order to enhance league-table results.

Carron seems knowledgeable about policy and policy changes in Scotland, if somewhat cynical about the effectiveness of new policy at the grass-roots. She describes the implementation of *Curriculum for Excellence* thus:

Well we have had a couple of people coming along and talks on it, and in-service days on it. I mean I don't think it's made a lot of difference. I imagine... we were doing a lot of what's it in it anyway. But we have changed our jargon, you know. Very often you see the Four Capacities on your wall, somewhere.... Well they are up in the corridor... We have certificates for assembly saying 'I am an effective contributor'.

However, she did applaud the principle of a more integrated and flexible curriculum in Primary schools

You know, we have every minute sort of accounted for, and I think they want to get away from that. I think Head Teachers are fed-up looking at plans and having to work out the percentages... I mean, what's the point of that? And so many things are cross-curricular.

So, although Carron is positively disposed to one aspect of this particular policy innovation, the evidence suggests that she sees policies such as Curriculum for Excellence as somewhat tokenistic, the adoption of another jargon. The advantage of the policy – in this case an integrated approach – is seen in terms of its lifting the burdens implicit in previous policies such as percentage timetabling. In other words, CfE doesn't, in her view, offer anything new, any radical improvement in learning or teaching. At its best it frees teachers from the worst excesses of previous policies. At worst, it is merely a new jargon.

When asked about the implementation of the post-McCrone Agreement she responded in terms of time and, in particular, the ways in which 'McCrone time' (the reduced child-contact time in Primary schools) has worked out in practice.

Well I must say personally I appreciate having a Tuesday afternoon. I don't see children, and I do appreciate having that block of time... It gives you a bit of leeway, and I think most people appreciate the preparation time.

In her experience, this time had not resulted in an increase in collegiate activities for staff. Rather, staff tend to see this time allocation as individual and personal and are keen to safeguard it from being used in collegiate ways. Carron, however, does not share her colleagues' outlook on the best use of such time.

Well, I think most people have used it as preparation time. I know sometimes feedback from plans and so on is given during McCrone time. Teachers don't like that, but I think if you are going to have these sort of times I don't see why it shouldn't be in your McCrone time. I have liaison meetings regularly with staff, and I usually do it during assembly, but I would do it during my own McCrone time or after school. People don't like their McCrone time being encroached on you know. They would rather do it at a different time.

Carron senses that her colleagues have seized on this extra contact-free time as a personal resource and that they resent any intrusion into it. For her, the liaison which is part-and-parcel of her work requires both her and her colleagues to be flexible about use of time. It seems, therefore, that so-called 'collegiate time', where it is set in the context of a system in which teachers are experiencing increased surveillance, monitoring and regulation, may not achieve its desired end. Such time allocation for her does not appear to denote that sense of freedom which classroom teachers seem to feel on release from class responsibility. The fact that she herself does not share this attitude to 'McCrone time' may be due to the nature of her work, outwith the class context, being more flexible and less 'prison-like'.

There is little direct evidence of what I have termed 'the grind' in Carron's account. She reports having few negative experiences in teaching, and, while she cites children's difficult behaviour as an issue, has always felt supported with this:

I've actually had very few bad experiences. I've had very challenging children and I've had children out of control. I'm fortunate I've always had support.

Her main reported dissatisfaction with the job is the volume of paperwork:

Paperwork. ...The paper work has gone through the roof... Are you familiar with the Cluster Resource Group? If there is a child you are concerned about, you try and get a picture of the child... You have to make a case for extra resources... The amount of paper work that goes through these groups. And you're doing it and something will change and you will have to do it all again.

She does admit, however, to finding teaching physically exacting.

I do, old age and all that..... I update these MAS about three times a year. I think we have 22 at the moment, and I have been up till midnight, night and weekends trying to get these done. When I gave them to the Head Teacher yesterday I was just sick of them.

Further, she acknowledges that the relative absence of a sense of 'the grind' in her account might be due to the particular type of Primary work in which she is involved.

I don't have the same burden with reports...I mean, I get tired, but I think I would be even more tired if I was in a classroom all day long.

She narrates a recent experience which she had when asked to 'cover' an upper Primary class

I mean an instance in primary six yesterday, and I feel this should have been sorted by now. I mean I have to spend about 20 minutes taking in lunch money... Somebody would say it was a mixture: 'I am paying for myself and my brother in this class and my sister.' 'I am paying for three and could I go round and tell them'. And 'I'm paying for the week'. You know... they were all coming with different amounts, and then there is a lunch menu. They had to choose. You need to go round them all...

This is the kind of routine administrative task which has become the lot of Primary teachers, and from which the post-McCrone Agreement, despite its promises, has done little to relieve them. Although Carron's role means that little of this work comes her way, she does acknowledge 'the grind' that is experienced through the daily repetition of such chores.

Carron reports positive professional relationships with school colleagues

I work very closely with the Primary One teacher and... we work very well together... I have a good relationship with the teachers. They are willing to liaise with me.

Carron is currently the EIS rep in the school but admits she is far from active in that role

I do the EIS stuff, not that I am particularly interested in doing it but just because nobody else would do it...And I just pass the stuff on.

Referring back to her experience while on supply, Carron describes the way in which the close community in some Primary staffrooms results in outsiders such as supply teachers being made to feel excluded:

I've been in staffrooms where there are people sitting on either side of you and they have a conversation as if you were not there. In our staffroom

people do make an effort with supply teachers but there are other staffrooms...and I can understand why they need to speak to each other because of the pressures of work, but I don't understand...I mean its just not on to talk across someone as if they are not there.

When asked to what extent she found that in her experience her own relationships with colleagues developed into friendships, she answered thus:

Well I would say they are colleagues... I mean its very much part of my job that I have to work with all the teachers, and its very important to have a good relationship, and I see my role as supporting them as well as supporting the children. I don't... not that I wouldn't necessarily like to ever, but I don't tend to see them outside school at all, and I think most of us would be the same. Some of the younger staff do socialise outside the school.

One of the support staff is getting married in June, and I am planning to go to the wedding. Well a few of the staff have been invited, so there are times when we would meet outside the school.

On the whole, therefore, Carron highly values positive relationships with her unpromoted colleagues, specially insofar as such relationships are necessary for successful professional co-operation. Again, her role as Learning Support teacher means that she needs to invest in such relationships in order to do her work well. Although some professional relationships have developed into more social relationships – as evidenced by the wedding invitation – this does not appear to be the norm for Carron, nor does she seem to aspire to such friendships within the workplace.

Carron's experience of Head Teachers has been, in the main, a positive one. On long-term supply she found

I was given support. The Head Teacher was very good.

She described the previous school management at her current school thus:

We've got a fairly new Head Teacher just now and – our old Head Teacher, she ruled with a rod of iron. She was very effective in terms of everything ran like clockwork. Discipline was great, but it definitely wasn't a collegiate style... There was no discussion....

The management style of the new Head Teacher contrasted with this:

Our newer, younger Head Teacher has a much more collegiate style and she is much more approachable....and she kind of trusts people to get on with things... I've actually worked quite closely with her. I tend to have a lot of

information on children.

However this change has not been viewed positively by her colleagues, partly due to their learned disinclination toward collegiality, and partly because the change of style was accompanied by a perceived fall in the standards of discipline:

But people on the staff have tended not to take kindly to being given a lot more responsibility... I would say our school really struggled with that.... I suppose it's easier if someone else makes the decisions but its not always the best way... We had local authority inspections and it was our working together that brought us down. I mean the learning and teaching was very good but the joined-upthinking and working together wasn't there. But she [the Head Teacher] is working very hard and I think we will get there. I think the difficult thing was that the discipline slipped. And children who had known the old Head Teacher....

Carron went on to narrate the unwillingness of senior colleagues to involve themselves in discipline issues as they arose and the problems this posed for class teachers. She told how she herself stepped in to support junior colleagues in this area:

I would sometimes end up having a child for a whole day or an afternoon, because a probationer would be upset by a child. But that was OK. I was quite happy to do that and I have quite a big room. It's easier to manage if you don't have the audience. It can takes hours to get senior management, and meanwhile you can't have a child running round the room shouting.

She acknowledges that she works very closely with the Head Teacher and that she has developed a very positive working relationship. Again, she understands this to be connected to the nature of her work with individual children, and to the knowledge base she builds up regarding these children.

I work very closely with management staff. That's part of my role, I am in a lot of meetings and so on.... Well you tend to have access to all sorts of things, you know. And I have been here longer, a lot longer than the Head Teacher has been. I found the Head Teacher was calling on me for information that I would have, background information.

She is keen to defend the Head Teacher from such criticisms as are likely to be meted out to her in her role, and is anxious that there should be no rift between senior staff and classroom teachers:

I mean I don't think the Head Teacher role is an easy one either, and... I think its easy to be critical of the person at the top.

I do think we all need to work together. It doesn't mean that you feel happy about everything. But I think it's very important that Head Teachers and staff work together.

Overall, Carron paints a picture in which her own role in relationship to management appears more equal than those of the unpromoted teachers in the study. That is not to say that she seems to claim such a role as her right, rather that, again due in large part to her Learning Support role, she finds herself in a position to help and support. She has the ear of the Head Teacher who draws on her knowledge of individual children and their families. She provides a supportive role towards the Head Teacher in relation to dealing with children and families in need. Further, she seeks to defend the Head Teacher from criticisms of her work from other staff. What she says suggests her awareness of the 'othering' of Head-Teachers due to teachers' perception of their role and her wish to compensate for this, to act as a go-between, a healer. She values the Head Teacher's attempts to foster a more collegiate model of school administration. She even compensates for the perceived lack of discipline in the school (which teachers attribute to the Head Teacher) by allowing class teachers to send 'problem' children to her during the school day. In none of this did I get a sense that she is aspiring to promotion nor distancing herself from her classroom colleagues. Rather I sensed that her need to nurture and offer support is extended beyond the children to her colleagues, and especially to her (younger) Head Teacher.

At Home – Life As A Wife And Mother

Carron saw her role as a young mother as being in the home:

I had a baby at 25 and you know I didn't think about continuing teaching, even though other people were starting to do that.

Later, she returned to teaching when her youngest child was starting school. She rationalised her absence from the home thus

Well, in many ways I have been quite fortunate in that my husband was home-based.

But she had also experienced tensions between full-time teaching and the role expected of her as 'lady of the manse'.

I just found I was too busy with hospitality and the manse and handing in

plans....but lots of ministers' wives do that now.

Further, she reported that the amount of work that she had to take home from school could be intrusive on family life. Her second child, Dorothy, has chosen to teach in Primary, but her son was deterred from teaching by the amount of work he saw Carron doing at home.

Carron is open about her need to teach being primarily economic:

I also had a husband who was unwell and not working and I needed to get into employment.....I wasn't really keen to be full-time at that stage but when my son went to university I realised that I needed to get more hours in.

Mark's inability to continue in the ministry had serious economic consequences for the family, in that, not only did they lose the income from his stipend, but they also lost the exemption from household expenses which are traditionally met by the local congregation, and they had to vacate the manse and invest in their own property, taking on a mortgage for the first time. At the time of the second interview, Carron's circumstances had changed slightly, in that her husband was again working, but in a low-paid clerical job. Her need to work full-time was still based on her family's need for her to fill the role of provider. When I asked her if she envisioned remaining in full time teaching until retirement age she answered thus:

Well I don't have a lot of choice at the moment because Mark is working with [name of employer]. It's a very low level job, very little responsibility and very low salary, and we have had to take out a mortgage, so at the moment, you know, I am at the stage where it would have been quite nice when the children finished Uni to have reduced my hours and so on, but that's not going to be happening.

She alluded again to the fact that it was difficult for her to find herself in a situation where she was the main breadwinner:

I would rather just go part-time doing what I am doing now.... Our situation has changed dramatically. It's just a huge burden trying to cope with the present situation... I am not longing to retire but I would like to have a bit of a quieter life.

Carron, therefore, appears to conform to the traditional expectation that her place, as a young mother, was at home with her children. This is reported with a sense of the inevitable. She made no positive decision to eschew paid employment in favour of mothering. Rather, she admits that it didn't occur to her to remain in teaching after

her children were born. This early pattern of mothering mimicked her own mother's. In the same way, (and again like her mother) Carron fulfilled the role expected of a minister's wife in manse and parish. She expressed no discomfort with these roles but seems to have experienced some dissonance in the role-reversal implicit in her becoming the main bread-winner.

Carron understood her own experience as a mother to have enhanced her skills as a teacher, although she does acknowledge, perhaps for my benefit, that such enhancement can arise from contact with children who are not one's own:

I think you can see the world through a child's eyes. I think I sympathised more with children. Not just having my own, but a lot of friends with their children being around. The sort of situation I am in with children needing a lot of care and attention and just chatting to them a lot. I mean that just comes naturally now...

When asked about relative experiences of working with female and male colleagues, Carron expressed the view that more male teachers were needed in the Primary sector:

We had a young man in this year and he has been brilliant with the children.... we have a lot of boys who don't see their fathers often, don't have a good relationship with their fathers, don't have a good male role-model in their lives... We have one man. He has been in Primary 5 and 6 and I do think that these boys respect him in a way that they don't respect women.

Carron's story, therefore, implies a strong conceptual link between mothering and teaching, alongside notions of the 'naturalness' of certain roles for women and men. She sees the care that teachers perform as closely related to the care of mothering and she understands the latter to render the former 'natural'. Further, her view of gendered roles in society casts men as surrogate fathers for children in school, especially boys.

In Church – Life As A Woman Of Faith

I introduced the topic of faith by asking Carron about her perceptions and experiences of the place of religion in schooling. She describes a school environment in which religious observance is broadly Christian. She stresses,

however, that most weekly assemblies are secular in nature, with religious assemblies occurring around Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter, when the Head Teacher's father, a Church of Scotland minister, would address the school. I asked if there was any resistance from colleagues or parents to such religious observance:

I am aware of one or 2 in the staffroom who would quite openly say 'I don't believe in anything, so I don't know why we have to do all this'. But I haven't heard of any real resistance.

She insisted that Scotland was still a Christian country, albeit *nominally*, and reported that several Head Teachers in her experience were *quite sympathetic to the Christian message*.

On the back of this, we discussed the tendency of some within Evangelical churches, including, recently, the Free Church of Scotland, to agitate for 'Christian' schooling – i.e. to withdraw children from the state system into private Christian schools because of the perceived secularisation and anti-Christian ethos in state schools. Carron expressed the opinion that the churches were mistaken about the need for this:

I am not at all sure about Christian schools. I can see the argument for Christian schools, but I wouldn't withdraw my children from school unless I felt they were really being damaged... They [the church] can make assumptions. I mean, what do they know about what's being taught in schools? You know, they do teach evolution but they also teach creation, and, in any case, many Christians would believe in evolution, or believe that we can marry the two, or believe in parts of it... I think there is a lack of dialogue and a lack of understanding.

She agreed with my suggestion that schools run by Evangelicals for Evangelicals would inevitably become elitist. However, she did go on to admit anxiety about the influences her son had come under from non-Christian friends at school:

But there are maybe things that we haven't really addressed in the church. Our children, most of their friends won't have a Christian background, and then it might be at the church that there's nobody their age or their sex. You know, the people they are closest to are not Christians... My own children... one of them has a lifestyle which I am very unhappy about... I think when we were in South Africa... the Primary school was very overtly Christian, or claimed to be a Christian school. My son particularly was very open about talking about being a Christian, and the schools here were a shock to him, and he kind of soon learned not to be so open, and went the other way.

Carron's narrative, therefore, presents us with a picture of Primary schooling in Scotland which is broadly Christian in terms of religious observance, and is 'sympathetic' to the 'message of Christianity'. For Carron this is justified by her perception of Scotland as a Christian country. But she reports no resistance to this from colleagues who might characterise Scotland differently.

Although Christian practices within schools would fall outwith the Evangelical paradigm within which Carron's faith sits, she regards the ethos in school as sufficiently in tune with Christianity to render Christian schooling unnecessary. Further, her commitment to teaching as a vehicle for social care makes her uncomfortable with the concept of schooling which separates Christian children (and teachers) from the kind of children for whom she currently cares. However, for Carron there are dissonances which ensue from the combination of her Christian profession and her commitment to state schooling. While she is committed to practising faith within the relatively secular environment of non-denominational schools, she has concerns about the social and spiritual implications of this for her own children.

For Carron, her strong sense of the need to nurture and to provide social care for children, is closely tied to her Christian faith:

At times I felt a bit tempted, I suppose, to look for a school in a more salubrious area because there are just so many challenges and behaviour problems and kids with huge problems. But I do have a sense of well this is where God has put me, and as many of our children come from... dysfunctional families and problems with alcohol and drugs and poor attendance, and they are just not cared for and I think they really need continuity and caring members of staff. And we have that. You don't have to be a Christian to be a caring member of staff, I'm not suggesting that. You know it's not necessarily the easiest of life, but you don't always choose the easiest. I suppose you know that you can go to the Lord if you are struggling and having somewhere to go for strength for each day.

Carron understands her Christian faith to underpin her commitment to the care and nurture of children and to be the central impetus for her work. Her narrative is one of self-giving, almost of self-denial, which she narrates explicitly as Christian service.

Carron voiced some frustrations that she could not express her Christian faith to the extent she would wish to in responding to the perceived needs of the children in her care. Whilst she acknowledged that it would be inappropriate to use school to evangelise children, she expressed the belief that Christianity had something to offer these children at their point of need:

I suppose I don't have as much freedom as I would like. Although I suppose I am a little bit ambivalent about that because a teacher is a teacher and my Christian faith is implicit in everything I seek to do. I'm not here to evangelise the children. You know what I mean? But just sometimes when I see children with such difficult lives who are self-harming and hate themselves and don't want to live, I have done, but in a catholic school so I felt I could do it there. But I wouldn't do that in this school, although I believe it. I just sometimes feel all the things we can put in place for a child cant really protect them. You don't have the freedom that you would have once had. And my school is no-where near our church so it couldn't really happen. There are so many restrictions. I mean I actually wish you could take some of these children and put them in touch with Christian people outside school. I wish you could connect them with clubs and things. In the past people did that, but its so complicated now to... You would be seen as proselytising or brain-washing.

However, despite this reported frustration, she did go on to narrate an incident in which she seemed to have been singled out as a woman of faith to provide support and succour for others in tragic circumstances:

You were asking about faith and how that affects my work. We actually had a very sad incident in October, a child was killed in a hit-and-run... and that was devastating for the school. But what was quite interesting was that the Head Teacher, she would... I think we would say she is a Christian but in a loose sense of the word..., she asked me and the support member of staff who is a Roman Catholic, she asked us to go to the support base for a day, to suspend timetables and to be there for any children who were distressed or needed someone to talk to... It was difficult, it was a difficult situation to be in, and its difficult to know exactly what to say to children in that, you know, you are not in a church, and you cant just tell them everything we believe. But there was certainly no difficulty about expressing some elements of the Christian faith, and in a non threatening way.

I asked what sorts of questions the children were asking and how she responded.

Well, this little boy's name was Paul and they would ask if he was in heaven now... I would just say 'Well I believe he is. Not everybody believes that. That's what I believe, I believe you go to heaven.' I mean I didn't go into all

the ins and outs of that. You know, they did ask questions about God and death, and heaven, and... it's an awkward situation in that you can't sort of go through, you know you wouldn't feel free to go through the whole Genesis story, or whatever. Not that you would in that situation because these children were distressed. But I thought it was quite interesting that the two members of staff selected by the Head Teacher were Christians, and she felt we had something to offer.

I asked Carron how her colleagues had responded to the fact that two Christian members of staff had been selected for this task.

They just accepted it. I think some wondered if it was necessary for the timetable to be suspended.... There are discussions in the staffroom. I know some people have no time for religion, but there is nothing personal about it. They would know I was a Christian; they are respectful. Some would be interested. But it's implicit rather than explicit.

Although Carron shares her faith only tentatively with children, she does so in a deliberate way. Further she narrates a longing to be able to express her faith even more openly. She believes that a more overt engagement with Christianity could significantly improve the lives of the children in her care: that she has at her disposal a resource that she is free to impart only in small measure, because of the constraints of her profession. Her Head Teacher's selection of Carron and another Christian to provide counselling following the death of a pupil would suggest that others also regard Carron, as a woman of faith, as having something particular to offer in terms of nurture and comfort. (Although a more cynical reading of that story might be that these women were selected by the Head Teacher for this task as neither had class commitments to be covered.)

I didn't ask respondents to detail explicitly in what or in whom they had faith. Between two women from the same Evangelical Presbyterian sub-culture, that was taken as read and understood. However, it is interesting that Carron's narrative clearly implies a personal relationship with the divine. She talks of being *where God has put me* and of being able to *go to the Lord* [a euphemism for prayer] in times of need. She also shares with the children her belief in eternal life. Her reference to the Head Teacher being a Christian in *a loose sense of the word*, implies that she regards her own Christianity as clearly defined, although that definition is not overtly articulated.

Carron and I went on to talk about our lived experiences as women within the Free Church of Scotland. She narrated her involvement within their own congregation in Central Scotland as quite positive:

We are probably quite fortunate in [name of town] in that it is a free-er situation than many Free Churches. A lot of the [name of town] congregation have not been brought up in the Free Church. I mean our Bible studies are very open and women do participate. And women pray.

While she acknowledges that, outwith this particular setting, women may experience things differently, she suggests that this may not be a problem for such women.

I have been in the situation where women are thanked for making the tea and that's about it, and I don't like that. Although there are some women who are quite happy just to do that – they wouldn't want to do anything else.

She gives the following response to the question of women's ordination in the church:

I don't know....I don't know.... I don't know many Free Church Women who would actually want to be Free Church ministers anyway.

And she puts the continued marginalisation of women within the Free Church down to a fear of change, at the same time suggesting that this fear is unfounded, because women do not want radical change:

And I think we are just so afraid, as if women are going to take over. It just won't happen. We would not be in the Free Church if we wanted to do that.

She does, however, acknowledge the failure of the church to utilise women's gifts:

I certainly think there are lots of talents among women that we are not using. I mean, for a while we had... one woman who would do the children's address fairly regularly, and she actually did it very well. But after all that big debate in [name of a city congregation] we stopped it. I don't see any reason why a woman shouldn't do the children's address.

I think we could be a lot more flexible. I don't see why a woman shouldn't read the scriptures. I don't see that. I'm not altogether sure about preaching, but I don't see why we couldn't read scriptures and participate.

I don't see why deacons can't be women. I don't see any reason. To be honest, lots of women are far better with finances than many men are, and we have also got some very struggling congregations so...

Further, she offers the opinion that there are some things in the life of the church which would be better handled by women:

I think there are many situations, counselling situations: of course a lot of that is done informally. Even a lot of discussions when men do all the discussing. I mean men just think differently. They can lack insight into emotions and so on and why people behave the way they do. They can be a bit book-worm sort of thing. You know we are meant to be a bit more creative.

I think women have a lot to offer. Even in our Deacons' Court, you have men sitting making decisions. I know it's usually about property and things. But they are making decisions without any women being involved and.....I mean we had a manse inspection and...I mean there are sensitivities. I think women would be more sensitive....when you have teenage children, and they wanted to look in every room. I never go into my son's room because that's the way he wants it.

Despite her views as outlined above, Carron insists that the positioning of women in the Free Church has not been problematic for herself personally. She sees her own experience as very individual:

Well I can't say that I do. [find it frustrating]. And I think, probably, I've had opportunities. To be honest, we were out in South Africa for years and most of the men are away in Cape Town or places working, and you are just expected as the minister's wife to take on responsibility for all these women... the women actually rule the roost out there. They think nothing of getting up in the middle of services and saying a word, or praying. It's actually quite a matriarchal society in some ways. So I was given more responsibility. You wouldn't lead a service in the church, but we would organise the convention and do the talks.

But she goes on to narrate her sister's story:

My younger sister, she's single and she is in a Pentecostal...she is not in the Free Church. And she is very active... She obviously changed her doctrine. I think she also found she didn't fit in.

And then her daughter's:

My middle child... she found [name of city congregation] frustrating,... And she said she asked, having come from [name of town], where women did take part in the prayer meeting, she asked about that and she said two elders told her she shouldn't raise that. It was just causing trouble... and she actually found that very difficult: to be branded a trouble-maker.

She also expressed empathy with single women in the church.

I think single women... can be in a difficult position. That has always been the case.... I know particular people were thinking of going overseas to do work with the Free Church when I was young. I had a friend who was quite interested, and she was basically told 'Only if you are married. There are plenty of opportunities if you are married'. Even in the South African situation, there weren't really opportunities for single women: everyone was expected to be married. But I'm sure single women could have done a lot.

Finally, she seems optimistic that women are beginning to be accorded a more meaningful place in the life of the church

I hope we will see women taking more responsibility. I mean, we are seeing some women being Presbytery Youth Leaders and so on. Slowly but surely, we will see changes. We have.

What sense can be made, then, of the way in which Carron understands the position of women within this particular Evangelical Presbyterian community, and how she locates herself within that?

First, Carron's story evidences her own relatively egalitarian view of the ideal role for women in the church. She believes women should be more involved, should be able to participate in prayer meetings, read Scripture in Sunday services and serve as deacons. Although she does not advocate that women should preach, she is *not sure* about this issue, which suggests that she is not necessarily convinced by the traditional hermeneutic of Pauline injunctions to which the denomination currently adheres. Further, it is Carron's opinion that there are aspects of the life of the church which would be improved by women's involvement, stemming from her perceptions that women are more sensitive and more creative than men.

Secondly, Carron acknowledges the limitations which women within the Free Church face, past and present, and the resulting frustration and marginalisation experienced by them. She narrates examples of such experiences in the lives of women close to her – her sister and daughter – and empathises with them and with what she imagines to be the problems faced by other single women. Her daughter's story of exclusion from public prayer, and admonition for challenging this, is particularly poignant, and points towards tensions between notions of 'unity' and the inclusion of women in Evangelical settings. Carron acknowledges that, where they

are included in the life of the church, women are often restricted to low-status, domestic tasks. Much of this work is 'behind the scenes', therefore unseen, and unvalued. Such a positioning contributes to the silencing of women within church communities, just as surely as the more direct silencing experienced by her daughter.

On the other hand, Carron does attempt to resolve some of this by suggesting that many women within the church are *quite happy* to be limited to a domestic role, and by insisting that no women within the church would have aspirations for ordained ministry in any case. Thus the issue of women's place within the church is deflected in a way which appears to accord with the wishes of women.

Finally, Carron consistently distances herself personally from that sense of frustration which she acknowledges in others. Despite the fact that she too is excluded from the areas of involvement which she lists above as desirable for women, she narrates her own lived experience of faith and service within the Free Church in positive terms.

Conclusion

Overall, there is a strong sense of cohesion in Carron's roles as a woman in school, home and church. Although she reports no initial sense of vocation, she is very invested in and fulfilled by her work as a Primary teacher. The striving to nurture and care, and the self-positioning as a supporter, facilitator and peace-maker which come across strongly in her narration of life in school, are evident in her other roles too. At home and in the manse she performs care in traditional ways, and extends that care to provide full economic support for her family when this becomes necessary. In church and parish, despite her egalitarian views, she contents herself with a traditional role, while empathising with and encouraging women who resist their marginal positioning. Thus, such dissonances as arise are resolved, in part, vicariously.

MAIRI'S STORY

Biographical Overview

Mairi was born around 1945 and grew up with her 2 brothers in a small rural village in the far north west of Scotland, where her father was the local post-master and shopkeeper. Her mother had trained as a teacher but never took up employment. She attended a two-teacher Primary school where her uncle was Head-Teacher. From the age of eleven, she attended Dornoch Academy and lived in hostels returning home only during the holidays. At the age of 17 she moved to Edinburgh where she attended Moray House College of Education to study for a Diploma in Primary Education. She lived in the Halls of Residence. On completion, she was offered a job in a Primary school in Lothian where she worked for three years. Around 1967 she married Donald, a secondary teacher from a small town in the far north-east of Scotland and moved to Glasgow where Donald was teaching. Here, she, too took up a teaching job. A few years later she and her husband moved to a new-town in the south west of Scotland where they still live, and, on the birth of her first child, Mairi resigned her teaching job. Mairi returned to teaching only when her third child reached school-age. She taught in middle-school classes from then until her recent retirement.

Mairi was brought up to attend the Church of Scotland in her home village and when she moved to Edinburgh became a member in an Evangelical Church of Scotland congregation. She attended meetings of the Free Church Students' Association with friends, and it was there that she met her husband, a Free Church member. When she married she transferred her membership to the Free Church of Scotland and she and her husband are currently members of their local Free Church congregation, where Donald is an elder.

I interviewed Mhairi twice, first in May 2006 when the interview lasted just under two hours, and again in April 2008 when the interview lasted two hours and 25 minutes.

At School – Life As A Woman Teacher

Mairi's choice to teach was heavily influenced by family. For her, teaching was a high ideal, and one to which she aspired as it was the vocation favoured and modelled by family members, both her uncle and her mother.

*Teaching was in the family and I never really considered anything else.
From when I was little I wanted to be a teacher.*

One of her brothers also became a teacher. She seemed to identify strongly with the job, and her account included numerous mentions of her love for it.

Mairi spoke with great warmth about her time at Moray House College of Education, and expressed the sense of freedom enjoyed there compared to her experience of school and school-hostels. But when it comes to the course content, she remembers little, and what does stick in her mind is the arts/crafts/sewing element involved. She expresses a sense of uncertainty about why they covered what they did and doubt that it was of much benefit.

You did things like hand-crafts, but it wasn't things you could do with children or anything like that. It was us grinding away doing sewing or doing all sorts of things that, to be quite honest, were useless. I remember doing a project on the Australian army, and struggling to get this ranch made, and do Australian animals from the outback. It never occurred to me then to ask why - it was just something that - this was what I was doing. Nothing to do with children - this was my project. I suppose it must have taught me something... But I don't really think it prepared us for a classroom to be honest.

However, one tale of resistance in this context is narrated by Mairi, in relation to her strong sense of conscious highland identity. Despite her admission that she failed to question the nature of her Initial Teacher Education, Mairi tells the following story, a story of resistance provoked by her need to defend her own people.

I do remember leading a walk-out from a geography lecture. The lecturer was being extremely insulting about the highlander and saying he's lazy and saying all sorts of things... A highlander, rather than bake his own bread, would get bread sent up from Glasgow and all sorts of things. Most of my friends were from Caithness, Dingwall, up there, so we looked at each other and said 'Right off we go' and so we marched out as a body. We were made to apologise for that later.

Mairi's career trajectory was such that she began teaching when she was still very young:

I was in the classroom at 20 and looking back I was just a wean.

Early career accounts from Mairi speak of huge classes, a sense of not really knowing what she was doing, and uncertainty that children were really learning.

I used to talk to them a lot. I remember just chatting, sitting my driving test, and just talking to them about what it was like. I often wonder what these children got from me, to be quite honest.

Mairi talks of doing *what we weren't really supposed to do* when others weren't watching.

I remember one day actually looking out into the corridor to make sure the head-teacher wasn't around, and then writing the 3 times table onto the blackboard. You were not supposed to teach tables... We used to feel apologetic if you were teaching a class lesson.

Her relationship with policy and policy-making structures seemed one of some distance:

One Head Teacher was great - a real teacher's Head Teacher... Yeah I think it was the beginning of 5-14. She shielded us from all of that. We had nothing to do with that... But when she left suddenly we were in the glare of this 5-14 that we knew nothing about...

Mairi reports a consistent maintaining of spaces in which to practise teaching in the ways she thought best, facilitated perhaps by the sense that the world of policy was distanced from her personally.

I've always been kind of old-fashioned and stuck quite a bit to my own way of doing things. You couldn't go along with every wave of change. I tried to up to a point. It went through so many fashions and I stuck pretty much to my way of doing things.

In one tale told it seems that the Head Teacher who took it on herself to protect her staff from the implications of the then-new 5-14, also encouraged Mairi to find ways round the letter of policy (in this case a pre-5-14 local authority directive that RME should not be overtly Christian).

She was a tremendous Head Teacher and she completely stuck up for her staff... But when we started back, we were having our staff meeting, we were chatting about what we'd be doing. And she suddenly pounced on me and said 'Mrs Mackay... (She refused to call us by our first names. She said, 'I

want to keep this distance'.) 'Mrs Mackay, drama'. And I just blinked. I didn't know what she was talking about. She said 'Drama, your Bible stories, put them under drama, do as much as you like, put it under drama'.

Her descriptions of previous Head Teachers imply something of distance too. She talks of her second Head Teacher as *old-fashioned and lovely*, but also as *the last of the old 'heidies'*.

Mairi spoke of the effects of life experiences on her attitudes to teaching.

But I found that as I got older still I became very much more tolerant - I don't know if that was just about being older. But latterly I could see the humour in most things.

She describes early experiences of teaching as isolating, but stresses the confidence which came with experience.

To begin with I did, it was a relief to come out of your classroom and talk to others, especially in these early days when you were in your class with the door shut. Latterly I didn't find it particularly isolating at all. I think it was because I was more confident and relaxed. And I was very aware of my colleagues next door.

Indeed, Mairi often spoke of closeness and camaraderie with colleagues, and this seemed to be bound up for her in a sense of shared ideals and standards, and a sense of collective experience with teachers of her own age.

I think I'm probably a grumpy old woman. But just hearing the way young children speak to younger teachers and the fact that younger teachers accept it I find quite difficult.... and these standards of discipline have gone. Not that I want to shout or harry children, but if I'm talking I do expect them to listen. I don't mind busy noise but the way teachers allow children to talk to them - I just can't believe it.... The last 4 years there was a group of us that used to call ourselves the SAGA group as we were getting on in years... We all had the same standards of discipline... and we were all over fifty and trying hard to maintain the standards... But when we meet now once every two or three months everybody says how glad they are to be out of it.

Mairi's account conveyed something of 'the grind' of teaching, and she related this particularly to aging.

I certainly found that as I got older I was very tired - and I got into the bad habit of going to the staffroom for a cup of tea and then going back to class. And it would be half past five before I got home. And Donald would say what have you been doing. Just marking and tidying up, just getting my head together... When I went home I was just useless for quite a while.... I was useless until about half past seven so I just wouldn't function properly

latterly.

She related it also to changes in school cultures which created for her a sense of dissonance between ideal and practice.

I love teaching, but as time went on I felt I had less and less time to actually teach.... latterly there was so much written work to do. It was all time taken away from the children.... I got very tired and laterally I got very frustrated with Head Teachers who seemed to have different standards from the standards that I had had all through life.

Mairi seemed very willing to narrate negative experiences of teaching, although these were clearly painful recollections for her. She recounts situations in which she had to 'appear before' school management to give an account of alleged mistreatment of children.

I had a couple of bad experiences with parents which I found very upsetting... A father demanded to see me, then I had to appear before him and the Head Master and explain these terrible misdemeanours of frog-marching his son down the stairs and all sorts of things that I was supposed to have done. I remember just being ill. That incident happened around the time of my 40th birthday. The family had paid for Donald and I to go to a really nice hotel for the weekend and I couldn't enjoy it because I knew I had this coming up.

In another incident a complaint was lodged about her shouting at children.

I had another really bad experience - again with a father - that affected me quite a bit. I had this boy - I had no worries about him - and it was the June parents evening - the father came in and just fired into me. Everything that happened to that wee boy was my fault - the fact that he didn't go out to play - everything that had ever happened to him was my fault. It really shook me because nothing had been said before... It absolutely threw me... We used to take the lines in from outside - there were 90 children in the corridor - and you held your hand up and some would see you but some wouldn't so you had to bellow. This man went to the Head Teacher and said 'That woman has got to be stopped' - these were his exact words - 'The way she shouts at these children - that woman's got to be stopped'... So that completely threw me... For the next year I was almost afraid to speak to classes until I got over that...

On another occasion, Mairi overheard parents criticising her classroom practice, implying that her rules were petty.

I heard a mother of one of the boys in my class say - 'Its ridiculous they're not even allowed to use a rubber'. I'd given the class the usual preamble about anybody wanting to use a rubber having to come out to my table - to limit the rubbing-out. I felt like saying to her 'Its not quite like that'. But I just slunk past with my head down.

Mairi's strongly expressed sense of vocation emerges from her successfully attaining the ideal of teaching which was part of the familial discourse of her childhood. This idealistic view of teaching appears to have weathered the storms of negative and esteem-crushing experiences, and to have survived the dissonances arising from changing practices and priorities in education over the course of her life's career.

Her narration of Initial Teacher Education is expressed with warmth, emerging, perhaps, from its being the vehicle for the fulfilment of this idealistic aspiration. Her attendance at Moray House and achievement of a Diploma in Primary Education replicated her mother's history, and provided an enjoyable experience, albeit one which failed, in her perception, to prepare her for the classroom. Her choosing to position this experience positively in comparison to school and hostel life contrasts with the sense of it *being like school* narrated by others. Despite this positive portrayal, what appears to be absent is any sense that her experience of higher education itself was life-changing. There is no sense of intellectual awakening or transformation. Instead there is a going through the motions without asking the bigger questions even where the motions are felt, at least in retrospect, to be worthless in themselves. There is here too, perhaps, a positioning of Initial Teacher Educators as the 'They', who, along with local authorities, policy-makers and HMI are constructed as an establishment who direct but do not understand teaching as work.

Mairi's narration of a troubling sense of unpreparedness and inadequacy in her early years of teaching finds resonance in all six of the narratives in the study. Such anxiety in the formative years of professional identity-development might account in part for the way in which she positions herself in relation to the power structures of schooling. An early sense that there is a right way of doing teaching which is known to those in authority but elusive to the class-room teacher, imbues those in authority with power not restricted to the domain of the particular school but extending over professional knowledge itself.

This is consistent with Mairi's relationship with policy and policy makers who are constructed both as distant and as potentially threatening, occasioning the need for a *real-teacher's-head-teacher* to offer protection from their power. There is an interesting dichotomy here in Mairi's perception of this Head Teacher as simultaneously caring and protective, yet also distant, and perhaps an implicit acceptance on Mairi's part of distance as appropriate in the teacher/Head Teacher relationship. (Indeed, another of the Head Teachers she most admired was described as a typical *old 'heidie'*, invoking a picture of paternal authority, or of power inscribed on the male body, and of social distance from women and children.) Here the particular form of power employed by this Head Teacher is constructed as benign, in which she appears to collaborate with her staff in the perpetuation of their marginal positions in relation to policy and policy-making, rather than enforcing such upon them. Thus, Mairi and her colleagues are afforded spaces to practise teaching in ways rendered relatively autonomous by their very distance from the power of the policy-maker. And that autonomy, in turn, allows her to be central to the social world of her classroom and to the lives of her pupils.

In such spaces is found, particularly with colleagues of a similar age, a strong sense of bonding through shared ideals set in contrast to current innovations and practices. Age is constructed then as simultaneously positive, allowing for the reciprocity of shared experiences and bringing relative confidence to do her own thing, and negative, both in the resulting dissonances between the ideals of old and young, and in the physical toll of body work.

Despite her strong sense of vocation, and her striving to render her life's career as a positive fulfilment of her childhood aspirations, Mairi does not omit stories of pain and discomfort. The effects of the allegations of 'mistreatment' of children on her personal and professional life are vividly told. Clearly, such an accusation is in conflict with her sense of loving the job and loving the children. Mairi shows extreme discomfort with the construction which parents make of her in these narratives. Perhaps, in 21st century communities, attempts to distance ourselves from an overly punitive past in teaching practices results almost in a demonising of the

raised voice of the teacher. This brings us back to the impossible demand on women teachers to be simultaneously controlling *and* nurturing, and the resulting implications for femininity when authority, culturally constructed as masculine, is invoked by women. The social imperative which demands distinct performances for women's and men's bodies, demands from women gentleness and quietness, whatever their task. The words of Mairi's (male) complainant '*That woman's got to be stopped*' seem to re-affirm this. And Mairi's response – becoming almost afraid to speak – confirms it too. She is in danger of failing at the task of the conventional feminine, and bearing the social stigma of that failure, in this case the caricature of the stern and heartless woman disciplinarian, so reminiscent of the matron she herself described at the girl's hostel of her childhood.

At Home – Life As A Wife And Mother

Mairi's interview data included an account of her childhood experience of having to board at a school hostel from the age of 11, due to the remote location of her family home. In one incident, when Mairi requested a weekend visit home, the Director of Education was asked for his permission:

The district nurse she was from [name of Mairi's home village] and she was going home one Saturday and she asked me to go with her. Asked the matron. She didn't know. Went to the Head Master. Do you know it went up to the Director of Education to find out if I could go home for a few hours. The problem was, I would have been back after lights out, but what a performance.

Mairi's description of the school hostel where she boarded included a somewhat heart-rending story of the confiscation of a special present sent by her father on her first birthday away from home.

The hostel matron was a one-off. She was quite a Victorian lady - probably not as old as she seemed to us, but she was a maiden lady, she was very, very strict. We had very strict rules, for example you were not allowed to have anything whatsoever on display at your bed... Posters on the wall? My goodness! Not even a hairbrush on the dressing table... When I was 12 my father had sent me an ornament of a white horse. I was delighted with this and was showing it to everybody. When the matron saw it she thought it was lovely and asked the name of the horse and showed great interest in it. So I left it on my dressing table. Do you know that I didn't see it again until

the end of term. She took it and when I asked for it back she said 'It shouldn't have been left out. It should have been in your drawer'. That was a 12-year old away from home.

She contrasted this to the boys' hostel, which, according to her narration, was run by a married couple who treated the boys better.

Mairi taught near Edinburgh until she married, then moved through to the west to live where her husband taught, having to give up her job and find another. She left teaching when her first child was born.

I continued teaching after I got married until the first child was born and didn't go back. You just resigned... there was nothing about getting your job back.

Her return to teaching is portrayed as accidental rather than planned for:

The reason I went back to teaching was that the neighbour across the road came over one day and said 'Do you fancy a day's teaching? I've agreed to cover but I can't do it. Will you do it?'

Even after her return to teaching, some of Mairi's account suggests she felt the need to keep mothering her own children in ways which did not fit well with working life.

When the kids were there they had an unfortunate experience of school dinners... Andy hated it because it was so noisy. So we ran up the road and I made them all lunch then we all ran down the road again... I was off my head...I wouldn't do that now.

She contrasts this to her daughter's attitude to her own space and time.

Whereas my own daughter says there is no way her children are coming home for lunch - she wants the whole day to herself.

She goes on to describe other generational changes which she perceives in family life.

One thing I notice, particularly in my daughter, they talk over everything with the children, absolutely everything... Whereas I think we tended, we did talk about some things but possibly we didn't talk enough about family decisions and things with the children, I don't know. And of course going back to my own parents we didn't talk about anything.

Mairi, when asked, said she thought that parenting had improved her skills as a teacher, and softened her attitudes to the children she taught.

I was much more laid back about things like gym kit because I knew what it was like from the other side. Yes I think it did make a difference. Because,

apart from anything else, my 3 children were in the school. So I wasn't just Mrs Mackay. I was their Mum.

Mairi's hostel experience serves as an early picture of a very hierarchical and yet somehow parochial system of authority. The white horse story in particular presents a picture of a system, and a woman, lacking in humanity. Mairi's account seems to imply that the marital status of the matron in some way accounts for her strictness and petty rule-making. Although she used the softer term, maiden lady, her account is an almost story-book portrayal of the stereotypical harsh 'spinster', invoking traditional imaginings of distorted femininity. This is underlined by her alternative construction of the leadership of the boys' hostel by a married couple.

In common with other women in the study, the turning points in Mairi's life appear to be over-determined by her gender, and presented as natural and inevitable. Her account portrays a sense of the order of things in which there is little reflection or negotiation but a perception of life as a natural sequence of events. Indeed there seems to be a lack of dialogue about life decisions. This is played out also in her relationship with her parents and, in turn, with her own children as evidenced by her acknowledgement of the lack of communication in these relationships compared with the later generation.

The way that teaching as work and parenting are juxtaposed is of note too. She describes the need to continue to perform some mothering roles – for example providing lunch in the home – as if she were not working outside the home, even though she acknowledges on reflection that this was over-ambitious. A close association between teaching and mothering is also made explicit in her account, and she stresses the dual nature of her role in school as both teacher and parent.

In Church – Life As A Woman Of Faith

Mairi's description of the place of Christian religion in schools resonated with the accounts of the other participants. She reported on religious assemblies, particularly around Christian festivals, and on visits from Protestant clergy and use of overtly Christian materials of worship, sometimes chosen by herself.

[The]service very much depended on the minister but... I was allowed to choose the singings... So we used to sing hymns like Thank You Jesus.

Mairi expressed a sense that she was limited in the extent to which she could share faith with children, and the resulting frustration of this position:

One of the things I'd found quite difficult with teaching RE was remembering when to stop, that it wasn't a Sunday School lesson. You would just give the facts; you can't give any kind of application. The children knew what I believed so I had to be very careful to say 'Christians believe that' and not that 'I believe that'.

I asked her how her faith affected her working life, and she recounted her refusal to strike over pay on the grounds of her Christian beliefs.

I did strike a couple of times when it was for educational issues. But I refused to strike for pay. Cause I said 'I'm not going to say I'm not working unless you give me more money'. I said 'I can't in principle do that'.

She also spoke about how her colleagues perceived her faith:

If there was any kind of celebration, there might be a bottle of wine at lunchtime and things. And I probably wouldn't have taken it anyway, but one of my colleagues immediately said 'I'll bring a soft drink for Mhairi cause she won't want wine'. And I'd never said anything... So I always had my soft drink.

Further, Mairi recounted stories of friends and colleagues who didn't understand references to biblical narratives, and she expressed regret that such narratives are becoming lost as cultural repertoire.

Although the topic of faith was introduced directly only in the second interview, Mairi's first interview was peppered with references to church and to church life which were within our shared framework of understanding. Yet she does not offer a precise definition of the nature of her faith, although she does suggest that her faith is of a specific nature:

One of the most difficult people to get on with was a teacher who was very involved in her church who was a Christian, called herself a Christian, used

the most appalling language... she would tell you every five minutes that she was a Christian. But it's not for me to say that she wasn't. It's just that she wasn't the kind of Christian that I related to.

The specificity of an Evangelical understanding of Christianity (and in particular, Biblical infallibility) is also alluded to in the following tale:

And my own children were in school, the local minister came and he did the miracle of the feeding the five thousand... And of course when the wee boy had his picnic lunch everybody else decided they would take out their picnic lunch as well. They hadn't liked to before, but they all took out their picnic lunch. And the children were aghast... We used to go home for lunch... we were sitting over lunch and we had the Bible out and reading this story of the five thousand but they were quite upset. And I tried to explain to them, you know, some people, even ministers, find it hard to believe that God performs miracles so they try to find some way of explaining it.

Of all the participants, Mairi came closest to offering a conversion narrative:

I became a Christian, through Scripture Union really when I was in Dornoch. Still kept going to the Cathedral [Church of Scotland congregation in Dornoch], taught in the Sunday School and when we were leaving in sixth year the minister decided it would be an excellent opportunity for us to join the church because we might drift away after that. And I refused. I was the only one that refused. And he couldn't understand why I refused... And I said 'I just don't feel happy about joining the church. And certainly not joining Dornoch Cathedral at the moment'. I think he was a bit hurt... I refused because it was a just a convenience thing. I mean I was the only Christian. I mean they were all very nice young folk but they thought I was a bit odd because I was a, one of these born again Christians, you know. He was a nice man the minister but a very, very Liberal kind of man. And I thought, 'I don't, I don't want to join the church just as a convenience so that I've got that done before I go off into life'.

Further she seems pained by her family's rejection of her faith. While Mairi's son and his family attend an Evangelical Church of Scotland, neither of her daughters attends church. Her youngest daughter's relationship with the church is particularly problematic:

Mary doesn't go to church at all... We used to meet for prayer in the house for Mary when she was very, very, very ill. And she was so appreciative of this but gradually as time went on and her illness got worse she hardened a lot.... Became almost, I wouldn't say bitter but... certainly hardened which was very sad... But I've noticed lately when she's been up with us, there's been a Bible beside her bed.

Although Mairi originally belonged to the Church of Scotland, she narrated a life-long sense of affinity with the Free Church, due in part to the similarity of the churches in her home setting.

I was brought up in the Church of Scotland and I grew up thinking that most of the world was Free Church because it's a tiny Church of Scotland congregation and much bigger Free Church congregation... We sang psalms and paraphrases mainly because we had no hymn books or organist or anything... I suppose the culture was mine in a way, coming from a wee Highland village where almost everybody was Free Church. In fact two of the Free Church ministers that were there, they used to come a lot to our house, because they could relax because we weren't part of the congregation. I should think that's probably why I was drawn to Free Church. Well it was folk I knew...

At the same time, Mairi seems to regret what she sees as the fragmentation of the Presbyterian church in Scotland:

Well...a cousin of mine died recently and a friend had been looking after her for many years and this friend had no church background whatsoever. Sheena had been APC so trying to organise an APC funeral but up in [name of parish], it's the Free Church minister that does it. And I just, I felt quite embarrassed to be honest. There's the FP's, there's the APC's, there's the Free Church, there's the Continuing. It's just so ridiculous.

Despite her earlier rejection of membership in the Dornoch congregation of the Kirk, Mairi did join a Church of Scotland congregation in Edinburgh when she became a student, choosing Holyrood, known then and since as Evangelical. Here she narrates her experience of 'coming forward' for membership:

I had to go to the Session all by myself. This huge session.... All men of course. Scary. There were a lot of men there but Jim Philip was very kind... And they asked me various questions. I don't really remember now what they asked me. But I just remember thinking 'Phew' cause I was there by myself.

In addition to providing an outlet for the practices of her faith, Church membership brings with it for Mairi a keen sense of kinship and community:

There's tremendous closeness in [name of town] in the church family, there always has been. Angus always encouraged us to talk about everything. You know, everything was open and discussed... we like each other. We've been away on holiday together to Portugal several times. We've been at Keswick house party several times. And we still talk to each other, you know.

In part, Mairi attributes this closeness to their situation in what is both a new town and a church plant situation:

We were kind of pioneers because it was a new town.... I think that's probably what makes [name of town] Free Church, it's such a close knit family community in that we all came from different parts of the country and then from different parts of the town... most of our friends we meet through the church.

As an active member of this community Mairi appears to find a large measure of personal fulfilment. She spoke of a life-time's involvement particularly in children's work such as Sunday School and Campaigners (an organisation similar in style to Guides or Scouts but with an Evangelical foundation). And yet, many of the stories she tells betray a considerable lack of autonomy in these activities, not least in this account of early beginnings:

James Mcintosh, a travelling evangelist... he did a week... of meetings, and then on the last meeting he said to the children 'Now I'm going to be going away but your needn't worry about your meetings because Mr and Mrs Mackay will be taking them every week'. And Mr and Mrs Mackay didn't know they were taking them every week.

Like its beginning, the ending of her work with children was decided by others according to this account of her 'retirement':

This past year I stopped working with the children in the church. I've been doing it for over forty years. I had said to John, the minister, that I couldn't see myself starting it until October last year because we're getting work done in our family home up in [name of Donald's home village] and I said 'I'm going to have to be up and down so I can't be there every week until October. So I think, if you don't mind, I'll not start the Campaigners and youth group until October'. And he said 'Well why don't you just take the time off? He said 'I'll take your place and we'll get other people to do it and just forget about it for just now'. And I said 'Fine'. And then at our AGM somebody was giving a report on the youth work and paid a wee tribute to me on all the work I'd done now that I'd retired. And I thought 'Oh I'm retired. Right fine'.

In this tale, she narrates the silence that is required of her in order to mollify senior churchmen, who would entirely disapprove of the innovative practice of open prayer in their new-town congregation.

We used to have a prayer meeting before church in the morning... The then minister, Angus, whispered to me 'Do you mind not praying this morning' because there was a couple from, very, very strict couple from Skye, and Angus thought he would be thrown out on his ear if it was heard that women had been [praying]...

Indeed, Mairi admits to a long practice of conforming to the expected norms of the community into which she had married:

When we got married, Donald's family were quite a strict Free Church family... And I think I was really too strict with the children... when they were little. Trying to kind of live up to my parents-in-law's standards... So I think probably I went, probably a bit overboard with Sabbath observance and Welfare of Youth work and so on...

She does, however, narrate a tale of liberation from that particular bondage (albeit in favour of what some might conceive of as simply an alternative form of servitude):

It was actually at the Keswick convention, it suddenly hit me like a thunderbolt that it didn't matter in the slightest what other people thought of me. It's what Jesus thought of me that mattered and I was responsible only to him and not to all these rules. It was just such a relief, really.

This relationship to ecclesiastical authority seems to have been established in Mairi's student days, even before she officially joined the Free Church. Mairi's account includes a reference to the 'Free Church class' at Moray House College of Education, an alternative provision of Religious Education delivered by Free Church clergy which was preserved from the time when the churches handed over control of teacher education to the state on the understanding that the church's interest in Religious Education would be safeguarded (the Free Church had founded Moray house in 1848). Such classes continued in some form until the late 1980s at Moray House and even later in Aberdeen and Jordanhill. In this tale Mairi appears to privilege ecclesiastical authority above that of the College or even of her parents.

I knew all the Free Church Students and they had Professor Cameron in Moray House... He told me he expected me to be in his class. And I actually had to go before the Dean. I remember her saying 'What would your parents say about you going to this class?'. I said 'My parents would leave it to my own judgement which class I went to'. And I really had to fight to get to that class.... And, Oh boy, and one of the essays we had to write, I still remember, was on Pauline eschatology. I didn't know what it meant.

The fact that she remembers this essay so many decades later suggests that this class made more of an impression than the other elements of her Initial Teacher Education; and the perceived difficulty of its subject again reinforces the conceptual link between Presbyterianism and academic learning.

Mairi narrates some interesting accounts of the practice of precenting within the Free Church in relation to the participation of women. In Mairi's congregation women do, occasionally, take up the role of precenting in the absence of a suitable male, but, as her account illustrates, women do not fill this role on the same footing as men:

Donald precent. We have male precentors but if there are not (none present), then one of the woman will start but just from the seat....The men would go out to the front.

Mairi is herself one of the women who will step into the breach. I asked her why she would do so from the pew rather than going up to the lectern.

Just wouldn't think of it... Probably if I was precenting, it probably would be one of the choruses [Biblical paraphrases]. And Iain would look over in my direction if one of the men didn't know it so I would just start from where I was.... Nobody would say anything of it if I got up to the front. It's just never occurred to me to do it.

This practice of women precenting from the pew is one which has evolved in the few Free Church congregations where women are known to precent. Mairi's account also included a story of frequently visiting a tiny congregation where a woman regularly precent as there are no men who can raise a tune. But when Mairi visits with her husband, Donald is always asked to precent, sometimes by the precentor herself.

Mairi commented also on the cultural expectations surrounding women's bodies in Christian communities.

But this evangelist, Mr McIntosh that I spoke about... He told various people... he was very grieved that Lillian's commitment hadn't lasted and she'd gone back into the world because I wore lipstick.

She challenged the practice of head-covering for worship in island communities:

I actually went to Stornoway Free Church without a hat.... I did! And I was a bit anxious but I thought I don't wear one normally, I'm not going to wear one.

Mairi recounts her dissatisfaction with the pace of change in the church with regard to the positioning of women:

Yes the position of women has not changed.... They are allowed to be missionaries and they are allowed to teach in Sunday School....And in some places... they are allowed to pray and to lead the singing. But no, their role in the church has not changed at all.

She admits to finding it all frustrating but immediately qualifies this.

I think it would be very frustrating anywhere but [name of town]. But [name of town] is slightly different from other churches and slightly frowned upon because we do things that other churches don't.

She explains that while she fully sees the potential problems for women in the church as a whole, her own experience has been exceptional.

Yes, well I think [name of town] was open anyway... we were kind of pioneers because it was a new town. We get round that [all male eldership] in that ... we've got a kind of door duty, church officer rota, men and women. So you can be greeted at the door by a man or a woman and so on. We've also got a pastoral team, mixture of men and women... So I suppose women's gifts are used that way in an unofficial capacity... because we are a small church... currently we've only got three elders... so the elders' wives and the ministers' wives kind of, got a bit more clout in that we can kind of tell them if... we don't agree with what they are doing.

Yet she does appear to acknowledge that this is not enough.

But they [women] are not... elders and of course they don't sit in the church courts in any way.... They just hear the decisions the men have made and think 'No that's rubbish! Why don't you do this?' They don't listen mind you.

Thus she recognises that women are ultimately powerless if they cannot succeed in getting men to listen to or agree with them.

She further acknowledges that it must be harder for women who worship in larger congregations and who are not married to office bearers. And while she understands the story of her daughter's estrangement from the church largely in spiritual terms, she also recounts the disparity between her daughter's sense of selfhood in her professional life, and what she could hope for within the church:

When she was down in London, I said 'You should try and go to the church, Mary, just to get to know people' I think she'd probably find it hard to keep her mouth shut. Mary goes to major conferences in the Queen Elisabeth Centre at Westminster in London. And Mary is one of the people who asks the questions, you know.

A specific understanding of what it means to her to be a Christian is not directly presented in Mairi's account, but evidenced often in how she positions herself relative to others. For example, her account includes a disassociation with a type of Christianity she observes in a colleague who was *not the kind of Christian I can relate to*. Her refusal to join the Kirk in her teens because of her perception that the other members weren't Christians, again serves as a demarcation-line between what

might be thought of as nominal and Evangelical Christianity. This is further evidenced in her reaction to the school chaplain's interpretation of the biblical miracle narrative, betraying her understanding of scriptural text as infallible, and in her own reference to 'conversion' to Christianity despite her existing membership of the Christian community in its broader sense. Further, as an Evangelical, her understanding of the eternal nature of Christian community would make her family's temporal membership of that community of crucial importance, and account for her distress at their estrangement and apparent lack of interest.

Her account does not include a narration of teaching as the direct outworking of faith. In her case, the enduring sense of vocation, rooted in familial values and aspirations appears to be what is being outworked primarily, while faith serves to provide an ethical framework in which to work. Yet it is clear that Mairi regards her faith not as a private matter, but as something to be shared and something which has positive potential for others. This is evidenced in her frustration at not being able to share her full understanding of Bible stories with children and is characteristic of the missionary drive which is inherent in Evangelicalism. Further she expresses frustration at the inability of colleagues to draw on the literary repertoire of biblical narrative, and at their mistaken assumptions about the nature of her faith with regard to her use of alcohol.

Mairi is clearly extremely invested in the life of her local Free Church congregation and has been over the course of her adult life. The absence of a narrative of teaching as Christian service can perhaps be better understood in light of her 40-year active engagement in more explicit Christian service in the various children's ministries associated with her church. Yet work with children, while Mairi appears to experience it as rewarding and fulfilling, is characteristic of the service-behind-the-scenes which is the typical lot of women in Evangelical churches.

Although in one sense an 'incomer', her upbringing in a rural Presbyterian community and subsequent membership of an Evangelical Presbyterian community in the Kirk, appears to have led to an authentic sense of membership, assisted

perhaps by her location in one of the least tradition-bound congregations of the Free Church, one which she constructed as 'pioneering'. It certainly seems likely the situation of her particular congregation in a new town and in a modern building will itself have some effect on the culture of church given the co-constitutive nature of space and social action. Her account of this thriving and active religious community also calls into question assumptions which correlate urbanisation with inevitable religious decline. The sense of a cohesive and enduring community-life renders very positive her experience of belonging.

Like her life in school and home, however, her account of her life in church appears to lack a sense of agency or a picture of negotiated decision-making. Her narratives of the beginning and ending of her work with children, for example, point to her acquiescence in the decisions of others. Although she seemed slightly hurt by her enforced 'retirement' from children's ministries, a willingness to go along with what was decided for her by male church leaders seems characteristic of her involvement in church.

In the story of the prayer meeting, the very deliberate (although narrated as reluctant) act of silencing on the part of the minister is accepted by Mairi without resistance. Indeed it is constructed as a reasonable request and is narrated without any evidence of disquiet. It seems that the position of women on the margins, and under the authority of male church leaders, is axiomatic to church life and that members neglect to reflect on the historical and theological implications of practices which forbid some to speak directly to God, but require them to be spoken for by others. No awareness is betrayed of the irony that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers – which allows all to approach God in prayer - was at the very core of the Reformation. It is telling that her minister, while he introduced and maintained the right of women to participate in open prayer, still regarded it as appropriate to require her silence rather than to cause offence to those with more traditional views, or to jeopardise his own standing in the ministry.

A particular performance of gendered difference is evident too in the anomalous practices surrounding precenting. Here we appear to see a picture of a culture in which women actively defer to men, always giving them their place as precentors where one is present. Further, they seem unwilling to take up the visible role of precentor where the absence of a suitable male renders a woman precentor necessary. There may be something here about making a distinction between leading and merely facilitating the praise, in order to comply with notions of the creative order. (Indeed, it is difficult to see how singers can be 'led' by someone they cannot see.) Perhaps the perception of the leadership role implied by precenting as masculine, results in women's self-censoring of their own visibility and thus remaining in the pew. In this way, what for men is a very visible role, when performed by women becomes, again, service-behind-the-scenes.

And yet, Mairi's account of life in church is not without stories of agency and resistance, nor without its own sense of liberation. She narrates, for example, that moment of clarity in which she realised that she need not worry about the perceptions of others, only of the divine. There is something here, perhaps, of the separation of culture and religion which is part of the repertoire of Evangelicalism. And this is played out in her attitude to the particular enactments of femininity required in the cultural norms of dress. In this respect, Mairi's account presents stories of mild resistance. First, she broke with expectations that Christian women did not wear make-up, and later, her felt need for consistency of practice meant that she was willing, with some trepidation, to break the taboo of attending church in Lewis with her head uncovered.

Neither is Mairi's account of church life without a sense of awareness of the problematic nature of her position as a woman in this community. Yet, like her account of life in school, her account of life in church is rich with examples of finding and maintaining spaces in which to function autonomously around the structures, without offering any overt resistance to them. While she would sympathise with women who may wish to offer such resistance, she contents herself

with the status quo, thus providing neither example nor tangible support for younger women to imagine things differently.

Conclusion

There is a strong sense of coherence across Mairi's account of her lived experience. She appears as a silent, passive observer in many of the turning points of her own life. Yet she appears to adopt similar processes of creating and maintaining spaces of agency in both school and church in order to enjoy some measure of autonomy without occasioning direct confrontation or conflict. In each area of her life, tales of discomfort are offered alongside tales of fulfilment, suggesting sense-making processes which do not always require positive resolutions or the need to consistently present in self-affirming ways.

JANE'S STORY

Biographical Overview

Jane was born around 1962 in England to middle-class English parents. Her mother was a secondary teacher of art and her father was an architect. She had two younger brothers. Around 1966 the family moved to a city in central Scotland, where Jane attended both Primary and Secondary schools.

In 1980 Jane matriculated at the University of St Andrews, graduating 4 years later with an honours degree in Psychology. From 1984-1985 she attended Moray House College of Education where she completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Primary Education. She married David, a molecular biologist from Wales, around that time and, instead of pursuing a career in teaching, she took up a job as a research assistant in the University department where she had completed her degree.

Around 1990, Jane's husband secured a job at a Research Institute in the east of Scotland and the couple moved to a town in Aberdeen-shire. Over the next eight years Jane took on casual part-time employment including waitressing, factory-work, child-minding and play-group leading which she fitted around the care of her two children. In 1998 Jane undertook a refresher course in Primary Education, beginning work as a supply teacher in 1999. She is currently employed for 3 days a week as a Learning Support Teacher, splitting her time between 3 small Primary schools in her local area.

Jane's parents were Baptists and she was brought up to attend a Baptist congregation in the city in which they lived. On leaving home, she ceased to attend church altogether. During the 1990s, she experienced a revived interest in Christian faith and, on the recommendation of a friend, began to attend the nearest Free Church Congregation where she is now a member. Her husband does not attend church.

I interviewed Jane twice, first in May 2006 when the interview lasted two hours, and again in August 2007 when the interview again lasted just over two hours.

In School – Life As A Woman Teacher

Jane's choice to train as a Primary teacher stemmed from her indecision about what to do following her degree in Psychology.

I just couldn't think of anything else to do at the time. We were getting married a year later and my husband was hoping to go abroad and work. I didn't go in with any good reasons – just because I had a year to fill and I hadn't thought of anything else.

Although she found her university degree rewarding and challenging, she had a very negative view of her Initial Teacher Education.

I did not like it at all. It's terrible to say, because you're there, but honestly I absolutely hated it, which I think is why I didn't go into teaching then... I think in university we were very much left... you were expected to think more for yourself. Whereas in teacher training sometimes we seemed to get the impression that the lecturers were just saying 'This is it, don't question it, just learn it', and we felt that we were back in school again and being just taught things and not expected to think for ourselves... we were supposed to be in a sense passive recipients.

Not only did she feel uncomfortable about the approach to student learning, she also felt that the course did not adequately prepare her to teach.

You don't really feel prepared for teaching – you've done 2 or 3 little placements and half a dozen lectures on each subject and you just don't feel ready.

As a result of her ITE experience, she chose to take up other employment. Her return to teaching, 13 years later, was sparked by the experience of volunteering as a parent-helper in her own children's school:

Partly it was frustration. I was going in as a parent helper and drawing lines on jotters and looking at the teacher thinking I could have been doing this job for the past 12 years and here I am drawing lines in jotters. And from a financial point of view I felt I should be pulling my weight at home more. The children were at an age that I could go for something and that was the one thing I had been trained for....

Having returned to teaching, she talks of a sense of satisfaction and achievement, and the sense that her work brings some fulfilment on a personal level.

I've found something I'm quite enjoying now... I suppose I've proved I can do it. When you're waitressing and that sort of thing, you think, 'Am I

capable of doing a proper job?'... I've learned a lot... I don't know how it's changed me as a person. Perhaps it's given me more confidence.

But she insists that her work does not define who she is. She has no real sense of vocation and would not feel lost or unfulfilled without it.

I did kind of drift in by accident... It's not that I had any ambition to do anything in particular... It's what I am doing; it isn't what I am. It's the job I am doing just now, it doesn't mean I am necessarily in it for life or wouldn't consider something else.

Her early experiences of teaching were characterised by a sense of inadequacy:

I was very on my own, making it up as I went along – just trying to find my feet... I was so unsure of myself to begin with... You're just left to get on with it.

Having worked briefly in supply, teaching across the spectrum from nursery to Primary 7, Jane took up a permanent position as a Learning Support Teacher. Her specialising in Learning Support teaching seemed to be accidental, something that happened rather than something that was planned for or aspired to:

I was doing nursery in the morning and the LS teacher left... I was asked to cover. So I said, 'I know nothing about it at all... but I'll do it until you find somebody'... Eventually... this job was advertised. They encouraged me to apply and I still didn't feel I knew very much about it but they gave it to me... so I sort of fell into that one accidentally

She experiences some dissonance between her own sense of lack of qualification for the role, and the broader expectation that she is in position to give advice to colleagues.

But it's terrifying to begin with, as you're there to support the teachers. People are asking my advice and I have no training... In the LS job there is a lack of support... That was difficult, especially... being sent off one day to write a policy without consulting anyone else or knowing anything about policy writing.

She acknowledged that her background in psychology is proving useful in this role, and that she was beginning to feel more confident:

When I speak to the educational psychologist I'm fascinated by what she says. So, yes, I'm interested in the processes of learning and why some children can and some can't, and what the difficulties are. It's quite intriguing.

Jane places a heavy emphasis on the child as an individual:

In learning support I'm having to treat all children as individuals and tailoring their learning to their needs, and taking their circumstances into account.

She also sees herself as champion and apologist for children with additional needs.

But who am I there for? Who is going to care for these ones? You can't say these children are never going to raise the school average so we just won't bother with them. That's just not right.

Learning Support work is experienced by Jane as relatively autonomous.

I'm kind of in a corner doing my own thing... you miss out on a lot of things, but then you've got your own space, and can try out different things without someone breathing down your neck.

This is contrasted with the lack of autonomy experienced by her colleagues in one of her current schools.

One of the smaller schools has a very ambitious Head Teacher. She was very much in control and made all the decisions, which you can't do in a bigger school. If I tried to plan with the teachers they would say 'Ask the boss'. They wouldn't make decisions. It all came from her.

She explained that while her colleagues' classroom practices are heavily monitored by Head Teachers, such surveillance of her work is not deemed necessary.

The autonomy enjoyed by Jane as a Learning Support teacher also appears to facilitate a measure of resistance less characteristic of classroom teachers.

We did have a Head Teacher... who was very concerned with statistics, and she wanted me to target the children who were just average or just below, those who could be pushed through the next pass rate, rather than the ones who had real needs, and I didn't agree with it at all. I just carried on with the children I was working with and she didn't really follow it up, because I don't think she was that in touch with what I was doing anyway. I couldn't have agreed with her... I just thought – you cannot leave these children sitting in the corner – these are the ones who needed it. The ones who are average, they're not going to have difficulties through life.

Indeed, Jane understands such resistance to be made possible by the relative isolation of her work from the running of the school.

[It was] fairly easy because she didn't spend much time talking to me or looking at what I was doing. It's very much a job you're left to get on with. Which is good in one way because you've got room to try things out.

A sense of 'the grind' was relatively absent from Jane's account of teaching as work. When asked about this absence, Jane put it down to a combination of working part-time, and to her being relatively new to the work.

I am only working three days a week, remember... That has probably got something to do with it, because when I had done five days a week I have found it wearing... And I think with my job there is so much I am still discovering that I am having to sort of think on my feet and perhaps invent things and make things up as I go along and find out for myself, you know, how do to deal with a particular issue. So it's not monotonous.

She also acknowledged that the nature of Learning Support work did not lend itself to the kind of fatigue experienced by classroom teachers.

You are not being worn down by the behaviour issues and that kind of thing... If you are ready to teach and you have got something and you want the children to learn it, and there are so many other issues like the shoe laces, and the person who keeps swinging on their chair, little things that go on and on and on and you just don't seem to get things done, and it's a question of time tabling... I am much freer from that point of view, and don't seem to have behaviour issues when I have got smaller numbers.

Jane's relationships are narrated as positive in the professional sense, but her account seems to lack a sense of camaraderie. All the teachers she works with are women, and she does note that, compared to the less feminised work environments she was previously exposed to *women sit and chat about things*. Yet, spending only one day per week in each of her three schools, she is aware of different work cultures to which she belongs in varying degrees, but only ever in part:

When you're only in short term you don't feel as if you belong anyway... I think you come in and do something and go away and the running of the school goes on without you.

Indeed, there is almost a sense of isolation

I don't know... you're not so much part of the school... you're only there part-time. They invite you out for Christmas meals and all this sort of thing. You're included in many ways, but it's not the same as being full time class teacher. You are sort of on the fringes. Not necessarily informed of all that's going on or given mail that might be of interest.

Jane narrates her choice to teach in the absence of either a sense of vocation or parental influence. Her insistence that her decision to enter Initial Teacher Education was merely a way to fill a year is consistent with her continued distancing of

professional identity from sense-of-self. Even when she later narrates her work as fulfilling and rewarding, this does not result in a sense of vocation. As she says, its what she does just now, not who she is.

Her sense of the worthlessness of Initial Teacher Education is marked, and she narrates strongly the closed and sector-inappropriate flavour of the approach used, having the advantage of a university education with which to compare it. Indeed, she gives as her reason for not pursuing teaching the perception, based on her ITE experience, that teachers are not allowed to think for themselves or to question practice. In this way, she seemed, at least at that time, to base her perception of teaching as work on her ITE, rather than to construct ITE as removed from the reality of teaching as work.

She narrates a sense of inadequacy and lack of skill when she began to teach, and again when she moved into Learning Support. Such a sense of inadequacy during early professional-identity formation may have implications for the relations of power in schooling. Yet working in Learning Support seems for her to heighten her sense of professional self-worth. There are several possible ways to understand this lived experience. It may be due in part to the relative autonomy of Learning Support, a role in which she narrates the absence of the surveillant practices of monitoring to which her colleagues are subjected. It may also be related to the perceived body of professional knowledge held by her as a Learning Support teacher, and the way in which the perception that she holds such specialist knowledge positions her in relation both to her peers and within the hierarchy. Further, her tales of resistance could be understood as simultaneously produced by, and producing, a sense of professional self-worth. Finally, the absence of 'the grind' of daily class routines in the presence of a whole class of children, affords spaces to pursue the task of nurturing in ways which do not coincide with the conflicting task of group control. However, it seems that this professional space which she enjoys also positions her as 'other' in relation to her colleagues, and she narrates a sense of isolation from her colleagues and from her schools as communities.

At Home – Life As A Wife And Mother

Like most in the study, Jane referred to her children as *coming along* rather than as planned. By that time she had given up her research work in order to re-locate to accommodate her husband's work and she eschewed career in favour of casual work until her children reached a certain age.

When my son was about 11 months old I started waitressing three evenings a week. When Molly came along I did child-minding. I always did something that fitted in around them.

She took up teaching only when her children were 8 and 10 years old, but she still felt guilty about not being available for them all the time.

I suppose I felt guilty in the early days because they had to go to a friend's after school and I felt guilty I wasn't there... But even though they just had to go round to a friend's for a while after school, you do feel guilty. And when you can't go to see them sing in a festival... that kind of thing. Or they're not feeling well and I'm thinking 'Should I be sending them to school – what an uncaring mother'. You're divided between the two.

She is anxious, therefore, to safeguard family time.

My life doesn't revolve around it. I want to keep time for family and that was a consideration when I thought about what I wanted to do. I didn't want to be neglecting them.

Jane felt that she brought 'maternal sympathy' to her dealings with children in school as a result of being a mother.

You understand children better having had children of your own... You relate better to the children; sympathise with them perhaps... You do have maternal sympathy.

Jane is committed to the idea that boys and girls learn differently and that women teaching boys is a contributory factor to perceived disaffection and lack of attainment amongst boys.

Boys work in a different way... The teachers in these schools are women for whom the education system has worked. They have been successful in it... Because they are women, perhaps they are using an approach that works well for girls. Can women understand where boys are coming from? Boys seem to like group work more, being more active and hands-on, in general terms. They are not the ones who will sit down quietly to the same extent as girls. There are differences, and perhaps lots of women teachers are teaching in a girly way.

Jane readily admitted to having no knowledge of, or interest in, feminism or in the women's movement.

I feel as if I'm not sure, never ever had anything to do with it to be honest. Yeah. Is it not a bit of an outdated kind of, I don't know...? I mean at one point there was perhaps more of a need, there were more inequalities and perhaps women had to fight more for them... It's not something that has really impacted on me.

She seemed to regard feminism as something from the past, referring to it as *Somebody else's war*, one which she could not be expected to engage with given that she was only in her forties. Yet she also reported that she had never heard her mother mention it and had never discussed it with her. I asked her whether she had ever been aware of being disadvantaged in any way as a woman.

Not that I have ever found, unless I am missing something. No I have never found it a disadvantage in any way.... I have never been aware of being restricted in any way.

I referred her back to her own school days and asked about segregation in terms of subject choice and dress regulations. She did acknowledge that such gender segregation had been in place, but didn't see it as having been disadvantageous to girls.

I think nowadays there are so many opportunities to catch up on, to take up these skills if you really want to, do evening classes and so on. There wouldn't be a restriction there if you said you wanted to go along and do wood-working or whatever because I missed it at school. I don't feel that I couldn't do things if I wanted to.

If anything, she regarded the boys as the more disadvantaged group:

The boys in Primary school had to wear shorts... So they had more of a grievance, I think, than the girls, because at least they could keep warm in the cold weather.

To the extent to which she acknowledged any issues, she was reluctant to view them as gender related:

There are so many rules at school anyway, whether you were male or female. You just have to accept all of them. You didn't sort of question. (Pupils) had to walk on the left side of the corridor. People didn't say 'Well why can't we walk on the right?' You know, you just accept it.

She expressed the view that, as comparisons are more difficult in feminised situations, it might be difficult to see female disadvantage in her work as her

colleagues are all women. However she insisted that, even when she worked in the University, gender was not an issue.

Within the university... I don't think for a moment that that was an issue, because there were women right, left and centre zooming up and doing PhDs and all the rest of it, and you could go as far as you wanted, yes, so that wasn't... there were no restrictions there.

She did offer the following tale of male advantage, but would not commit to the view that gender was definitely in play.

We have a new Head Teacher who is coming in... There was a man and a woman interviewed for the job. The man was young and the woman was an older lady; and I know the general feeling was 'I bet the man gets it', and he did. That could have had nothing to do with being male... but I think that was the general sort of feeling amongst the staff, 'He will get it because he is a man...' Yes, and he was considerably younger and less experienced than the woman, but that might not be the reason.

I quoted to her the then current gendered statistical probability of becoming a Head Teacher in Scottish Primary schools – roughly, one in four male teachers become Heads while only one in ten female teachers do. Her response was as follows:

Do all women want to be Head Teachers, you see?... Well, you can't blame the men for that, can you? If women don't apply you are going to end up with [unclear] proportions aren't you?

She argued that it was *the sort of natural mothering instincts* which resulted in women, rather than men, putting family before career. I asked whether fathers did not have natural parenting instincts too:

Perhaps they have providing instincts or something whereas women, I don't know, want to be with the children.... I wouldn't have wanted to be working when mine were young.

Neither did she see it as problematic that societal expectations dictate that women rather than men should restrict their working lives when they become parents, although she felt such expectations might be unfair for men:

I think there is a big pressure on women not to take time off, to be honest, or men for that matter, as well. Although men, of course, there is paternity leave and all sorts of things which didn't seem to be around before, so perhaps the men have an issue with inequality. 'Hang on a minute! I have a new child and I have to go back to work.

Given her class background and her exposure to the liberating possibilities of higher education, one might have expected Jane's story to stand out from the rest. Yet it

seems that Jane's life trajectory is quite considerably shaped and influenced by gender. Her life is constructed around marriage and child care, with serious consequences for her working life, and this is presented as natural and unproblematic, and as inevitable rather than negotiated. She constructs mothering and paid work in opposition, narrating her sense of guilt when she returned to professional work part-time, and expressing anxiety about safeguarding family time. This sense of uneasiness surrounding the boundaries between home and school is evident across the narratives.

This understanding of the role of wife and mother is consistent with Jane's fixed notions of gender as narrated in her views on boys in school, and her naturalisation of mothering instincts in women and provider instincts in men. Her lack of interest in the women's movement is held in common with the other respondents, yet Jane appears almost to be in opposition to the ideals of feminism, mounting arguments which draw on notions of male disadvantage and of female contentment with the status quo.

Jane's account says almost nothing about her husband, and nothing at all about his role in the home. Neither does she share anecdotes about her children, mentioning them only in terms of her mothering responsibilities. This omission might be to do with her possible perception of the interview process as a professional engagement, or it may have been about her need to maintain the privacy of her home life. But it is in marked contrast to the numerous unsolicited references to family members in the accounts of others.

In Church – Life As A Woman Of Faith

Of all the participants, Jane was perhaps the most diffident when it came to speaking about matters of faith. She gave monosyllabic answers when asked if she identified as a Christian and if her parents were Christians, and when asked how important faith was in her life she answered:

Well it has to be central, yes.

She was more forthcoming in the discussion about the place of religion in schools. She painted a now familiar picture of broadly Christian assemblies and of involvement of local Presbyterian and Catholic clergy in religious education and observance. But she reported little resistance to this from parents or colleagues. However, she seemed not to value the continued practices of religious observance in Scottish education.

I think it's more traditional than anything else, you know... I don't think there is much in it to be honest. I think it is just [both talking] a formality really... I mean, if what they had now went, I don't think it would make a big difference, to be honest. Really, I mean, they sing songs and they like them if it's a jolly tune, but... I don't think the words mean much and, of course, they tend to go for the ones without much content in them anyway. You wouldn't get much out of the religious practices that go on... It's a sort of left over. I don't know... it's just a tradition, a tradition without much meaning.

She made a connection between her Christian faith and her work as a teacher, seeing the latter as an outworking of the former.

...especially with the children I'm working with, the ones you know with learning difficulties and so on. ... I mean these children are the ones who don't really fit.

Jane was conscious of a sense of being an 'outsider' within the Free Church of Scotland, due to her upbringing outwith the church. Although some aspects of the religious repertoire of Evangelicalism would be common to the Free Church and the Baptist community of her childhood, this was insufficient for a complete sense of belonging:

I think you sense that [the strong sense of identity enjoyed by 'insiders'] if you come in as an outsider. You feel that you don't quite belong in this family in a sense.

Within a city congregation, however, she claims that this does not result in a significant sense of isolation.

I think our congregation has got so many people from elsewhere now you find eventually you are not the only one at all who has never been to Lewis or whatever [both talking]. Or who doesn't have a single connection to the Free Church in their background. You find you are not the only person who has, who can't trace their Free Church ancestry back to 1843.

She contrasts her experience with mine:

See I don't have that [Free Church upbringing] at all, which is quite good in a way. I suppose I am in it for the right reasons and not by default as it were because you have been brought up to be, and you don't feel you can leave without... not upsetting everybody.

Indeed she sees her own position in relation to the Free Church as opposite to mine:

*I'm afraid I didn't know there was such a thing as the Free Church until I walked into it. Never heard of it. But no, there are no kind of family loyalties, you know, to respect or anything like that.... Quite the opposite. I have to try to put roots down in there, whereas **you** are thinking 'How can I get my roots out of there without pulling out all the plants all about you?'*

Jane teaches in the Sunday school, although this seemed to be by accident rather than design.

That's only because somebody asked me a very long time ago... She phoned me up and said 'Jane I need somebody to share the class with me', and I said 'No', and then I made the mistake of saying 'Well I tell you what, see if you can find anybody else and if you can't, get back to me'. And, of course, the next day she phoned me and says 'I can't find anyone else'. So I suppose I have been there ever since.

Jane reports no discomfort with the way in which women are positioned in the Free Church of Scotland. She seemed surprised at the implication that this could be an issue and responded to my question with laughter and a brief, 'No'. She went on to offer evidence that there was no issue by pointing out deviations from the gendered pattern:

*Some people are more sensitive to these things than others, I don't know... I think there are some expectations like... women prepare the lunch or do the dishes, but there are men doing this as well... I mean, men are involved in things that I think they would assume that women would do, like being on crèche duty, but I think that's just the parents, you know, fathers who are roped into that. I'm not sure. But there **are** men doing that and in teaching the children, making soups for lunches and doing the dishes.*

When I raised the question of precenting, she again pointed out the exceptions to the rule.

I've been to the Perth Free Church and there was a woman precenting, and there is another one... We went to somewhere else and it was a woman... although she didn't come out to the front.

When I stressed the very exceptional nature of these incidents she offered the following comment:

That's just tradition isn't it, but... Well I wouldn't want to prevent so it doesn't bother me. If a woman decided to do it, you know [both talking]. Perhaps she can't pitch it at the right level.

She admitted to having never really considered the question before:

Yes, it always has been (men), but I have never sort of investigated to find out whether that's just because no women has ever happened to be interested or whether there is a definite reason why they wouldn't ask a woman... And never been sure whether it wouldn't be done or just hadn't been.

Indeed that seemed to be her position on all areas of exclusion for women outwith the Pauline prohibitions.

Perhaps the women just haven't shouted loud enough. Perhaps they are like me and are perfectly happy not to be involved... Who makes the decisions and how are they changed, I don't know. I'm not politically minded enough to.....

And where she does acknowledge frustration, it is in the failure of men to deal adequately with the domestic issues.

Oh, I think some things are frustrating, like the state of the toilets and things, you know. If it was women making these decisions, they would improve things dramatically but men don't see the need. Yes, I think you probably need a balance of men and women for some issues.

I asked her how she felt about being part of a church culture in which the expectations of her as a woman were for the most part domestic.

I don't know, I am just trying to think what expectations are of me... I don't know, I mean, some things are particularly men's roles obviously like the preaching obviously, but there's a good reason for that.

She went on to mount her own defence of the church against the perceived threat of my position:

RES I think you are very sensitive to all these women's issues, actually, in a way that I am not... And you are probably looking for these issues wherever you go. You notice them... The question is 'What do you do with your views? Do you sort of keep quiet or, I mean, if you really wanted to push for change, at what cost would you do it? I mean, would you be willing to create huge amounts of trouble to achieve one point, because you could create more damage in the process...? You can't necessarily have everything the way you want it without trampling people underfoot to do it.

INT But then... I mean, if the suffragettes had taken that attitude you still wouldn't have the vote, you know. It depends if it's right to go for change...

RES *Then I suppose it depends on how you go for it. yeah. I am just thinking about people who are so determined to get their own way in the church... you could throw the baby out with the bath water... You could destroy the very thing you are trying to improve, if you are not careful.... You can sacrifice bigger issues for smaller ones, you know. You might be so set on something that isn't really the biggest and most important issue...*

INT *I think there is some truth in that, and yet, at the same time, part of me says, 'Yes, but that's a good way of keeping women quiet, you know...*

RES *I think, in the Free Church, it would take a long time. You would have to be subtle [both talking]. I don't think you could be too radical about things [both talking]. [Laughing] Something would shatter.*

I pointed out that many women of my own generation who had been brought up in the church were no longer part of the Free Church community. Jane pointed out, in turn, that other women, like herself, had chosen to join the Free Church. She was unwilling to concede, therefore, that there was a problem that could be related to gender.

I mean, is it to do with feminist issues or is it something else...? It's not necessarily a feminist issue... Well if there are factors that are driving women away, how do you account for the women who are coming into the church from elsewhere, you know?

At the conclusion of the interview she offered the following reflections:

It's interesting: you are looking at issues which I haven't necessarily been aware of particularly, or conscious of, but that's a result in itself I suppose, a non result, a negative result, because some people will have strong views and others might cruise along quite happily and not be affected by it.

I wonder if you found it difficult because you have been brought up with it and you have never had a choice over the issue, and you feel you are constrained by those restrictions that you haven't voluntarily brought on yourself, so you feel the frustrations and you want to get out. Whereas somebody who has no ties and comes in sees it totally differently. They sort of come voluntarily, as it were...

Jane's diffidence in discussing matters of faith was characteristic of her response to any issue in the interviews which she read as personal rather than professional. Her comments on teaching as an outworking of faith arose only in response to a direct question about the interrelation between faith and work.

Jane's comments on the meaninglessness of religious practices in schools might be understood to evidence an attempt at disassociation from what might be regarded as 'nominal' Christianity. Such a disassociation was present in some form in each of the accounts from members of the Free Church, although the other two narrate it in relation to individuals rather than to institutions.

Further, Jane appears anxious to establish a dichotomy between culture and religion, and to construct her faith as something independent of, and of more importance than, culture. By this process she resolves any dissonances which arise from her narrated sense of isolation from the Free Church in terms of her lack of familial, historical or geo-cultural belonging. Jane even constructs her narrated 'outsider-ness' in terms of indigenous belonging to the religious community as virtue, as belonging for reasons she sees as more valid than mine. She understands her association with the Free Church as voluntary and chosen, and there is an implication that this kind of belonging is therefore pure and untainted.

Further, it is by citing the voluntary nature of her group membership that she makes sense of her narrated contentment with the roles afforded to her as a woman in this religious community. To the extent to which she acknowledges any restrictions at all (and she is very resistant to the implication that she is restricted) she accepts these as part of the package she chose.

The dichotomising of true faith and culture is also drawn on by Jane in defence of certain religious practices. She justifies the lack of women precentors on the ground of its being merely tradition. Because this restriction is not faith-based, she implies, the matter is of no importance. Conversely, she cites *obvious reasons* as justification for women being barred from preaching, these being, presumably the Pauline prohibitions. The implication here is that because this position is clearly faith-based, informed by biblical directives on church order, it is non-negotiable, and has no relevance for any feminist debate. It is true religion, untainted by culture.

Jane admits to having given little consideration to the issues I was raising regarding the positioning of women in the Free Church. Yet she seemed to find my problematisation of the matter uncomfortable. She was keen to defend the church and did so by characterising the problem as mine and implying that the questions I was asking represented a potential threat to the future well-being and ultimate preservation of the church: as if a feminist agenda must inevitably disrupt important religious values. The dialogue also challenged me to 'prove' the presence of a problem with hard data.

This clash of perspectives exemplifies the fraught-ness of ethnographic enterprise. What happens when my interpretation of the social world we share seems so diametrically opposed to that of my participant? The best answer I can offer is that conversations such as this one are part of the persistent negotiation of religious meanings and practices within this subculture. The fact that this one was initiated by a formal research endeavour and captured on record, does not negate its legitimacy as part of that process.

Given her age, background and education, Jane's narrated comfort with, and defence of, the traditional position of women in home and church surprised me. Further, given her reported absence from religious communities for a large part of her adult life, and her novice status as a Free Kirker, I was intrigued how invested she now seemed to be in the 'package' that is conservative Evangelical Presbyterianism. Having a clear desire to belong, but an inability to draw on birth-right as a key marker of belonging, is it possible that acquiescing in, adopting and defending the cultural specificities of the Free Church is an attempt to establish her membership? In order for her to define her membership as genuine and authentic she distances herself from relatively progressive values to which more established women members are relatively open. This might account in part for her considerable discomfort with my implied challenges, a discomfort less evident in the interviews with connate Free Church women. It might also account for the apparent absence of the strategic process of creating and maintaining spaces of agency within church structures which we see to some extent in her account of her professional life. Yet,

given that not all the religious practices to which she appears to acquiesce can find Biblical justification, such an interpretation does not sit easily with her own insistence on the transcendence of true faith over culture, an insistence which she clearly uses to define and validate her own membership. Clearly, the challenges of negotiating a religious identity in which one enjoys a sense of belonging and of self-efficacy differ considerably from woman to woman even within the relatively contained sub-culture of Scottish Evangelical Presbyterianism.

Conclusion

Jane's account of a relatively self-assured professional identity sits easily with her more privileged background in socio-economic terms, and her higher level of education. Yet her account of life at home and in church held some unexpected emphases for me. That relative sense of autonomous self which is evident in her account of school life does not appear to translate to the other spheres of lived experience. Her account resonated with those of most other respondents in terms of that sense of lack of negotiation or positive decision making at life's major turning points.

KATHERINE'S STORY

Biographical Overview

Katherine was born around 1946 and brought up in a large town in the north-east of Scotland. Her mother was from the Isle of Lewis, the heartland of Evangelical Presbyterianism, and her father from Ross-shire. As a child she attended one of the Free Church of Scotland congregations in the town where she lived. In 1965 she left home to live in Aberdeen where she attended the College of Education to study for a diploma in Primary Education, and stayed in 'digs' with another student. While in Aberdeen she became engaged to Bill, a trainee photographer from Aberdeenshire. Having qualified, in 1968 she returned to her parents' home and lived there for a year while teaching in a local school. In the summer of 1969, she and Bill married in the Free Church and Katherine returned to Aberdeen where Bill had by that time taken up employment. Katherine secured employment as a teacher immediately, and taught for two and a half years, before leaving in 1972 when she was expecting her first child. In 1976, when her second child was a year old, Katherine returned to teaching part-time to do supply work, and secured a position in a local nursery for 6 months in 1979. In 1980, she took up a permanent full-time post at an infant School in central Aberdeen, and remained in that post until her resignation in 2003. Katherine and her husband, now grandparents, continue to live in retirement on the outskirts of Aberdeen where they are occasional worshippers in their local Church of Scotland congregation.

I interviewed Katherine twice, first in May 2006 when the interview lasted just under two hours, and again in August 2007 when the interview lasted one hour and 15 minutes.

At School - Life As A Woman Teacher

For Katherine there seemed a sense of powerlessness and lack of agency in her choice to teach. She spoke, not in terms of vocation or calling, but in terms of inevitability:

I was brought up thinking that was what I should do – it was inbuilt.

The choice to become a Primary teacher was not hers. Rather, she was merely following instructions from her mother, and these instructions came of pragmatic rather than idealistic motivation.

My mother told me! My mother told me right from the start – you'll be a teacher and you'll get all the holidays.... and that's all come to pass. She had it all worked out!

And so Katherine left home in the mid-sixties around the age of 18 to attend the College of Education in Aberdeen. This, potentially, was a significant life-changing experience, moving from her parental home in a Highland town to independence in city life. On reflection she acknowledged being very young and naïve but she was able to recall very little of her life experience at this time.

Katherine appeared to communicate a sense of ambivalence about her Initial Teacher Education, regarding it as enjoyable but pretty useless.

Good fun, I enjoyed it...what I can remember of it....What I actually learned which helped in practice, I don't know.

Her recollections of making and displaying dresses exemplify quite nicely the pleasant and homely if somewhat bizarre nature of the curriculum at that time, when the feminised diploma course included compulsory needlework and domestic science:

I don't remember much. We had a sewing class, and I made dresses and they were put up on display on the wall. I remember that quite clearly.

She expressed a sense of dissonance or misfit between her experience of College of Education and practice in schools, and regarded lecturers as holding a set of pedagogical skills and values which were not relevant to her as a teacher in training:

What the lecturers were telling us was quite different from what was happening in schools.

This sense of disregard for Initial Teacher Education is common place amongst Primary teachers. What appears to be absent from Katherine's account is any sense that her experience of higher education itself was life-changing. There is no sense of intellectual awakening or transformation.

Accounts of making materials in the Early Years of teaching invoked images both of a passive woman, accepting lack of resources, and of a creative, nurturing woman compensating for that lack from her own resources.

We had no material to work with and what there was ancient – Janet and John and old textbooks. Little jigsaw things. I remember these boxes: they were so old and tatty. So I had to make a lot of my own materials.

Katherine identified very strongly as an Early Years practitioner. This strong sense of her role as a carer for little children – a role which facilitates particular performances of gender, and of conventional femininities – accords closely with her description of her role as a mother (in the next section). She alluded to her own expertise in the area of Early Years, but usually in a negative way of ascribing lack of pedagogical knowledge of Early Years to others.

None of them were infant-orientated or had taught in infants at all. Not one of them had taught in infants. They hadn't a clue. They hadn't been near a nursery at all.

In Katherine's story, there was the repeated suggestion that those in positions of power – Head Teachers, lecturers and local authority officials – lacked pedagogical knowledge.

The lecturers are away from it all. They're not hands-on at all and what they talk about, it's quite different... ..I remember another time we were doing writing in school and the Head Teacher had arranged for a lecturer to come in and show us how to teach writing with infants. I had never heard such a load of baloney in my life, honestly.

Katherine's account stressed her own commitment to child-centred (play-centred) pedagogies and there emerged a sense of dissonance between this commitment and the current practices in schools, experienced particularly through pressure to test.

Testing is the biggest load of rubbish. I remember vividly when Rosie – she was Acting-Head at the time... There were 3 or 4 in the class that I said had definitely failed... She said 'Oh let me see their papers and she said 'Oh, I think that's what he meant – we'll give it to him'. And I said 'Well, I'm not happy about him going up as a level what-ever-it-was. I don't want the teacher up there to think I just let them through. I don't think they are worthy of that pass'. So I asked her to sign the top of their papers. And she did it no problem. But it's all a numbers game.

Such changes are symptomatic of the de-feminisation of the profession – the ways in which knowledges characterised as feminine (child centred pedagogies) are being displaced by knowledges characterised as masculine (standardised test data).

Katherine's discomfort with this displacement of her own understandings and values is evident. This account is the nearest to one of resistance in Katherine's narrative. Her story provides an example of the ways in which teachers experience conflict between what they wish to do in their work (based on their own understandings of pedagogy) and how they are directed to work by those perceived to be in authority.

In Katherine's account there emerged an intriguing unawareness of policy changes. Although she taught until 2003, she appeared never to have heard of 5-14.

However, there **was** an awareness of change, and that as something that was wearisome and imposed:

I mean latterly different Heads coming in, Acting Heads, change, change, change all the time. I mean, I don't mind change if its going to be worthwhile, but I couldn't see the sense in it...I think it was just an attitude and the way they went about it.

The fact that her perception of the origins of 'change' seemed to begin and end with Head Teachers, betrays her almost child-like lack of consciousness of the wider policy contexts of local and national authorities.

Time emerged as problematic in different senses. For Katherine, time was an issue in terms of preparation and evenings, but also within school hours. This problem was perceived to have continued despite the nominal 35 hour week introduced by McCrone:

The working hours didn't change where we were concerned. We worked long hours, long hours; nights as well. Perhaps we should have stuck to that (the 35 hours) but... there is so much to do.

The requirement to timetable and to account for her time rankled too:

We were told by our DHT that we had to timetable our day, and she came in to one of the other teachers and asked 'Why are you doing that now. You should be doing something else.' We never worked like that and even trying to do it you were bound to slide over onto the next.. You just couldn't plan it that way. Oh, I'm so glad I'm out.

There is something here about Primary teachers and time, and the increasing regulation and surveillance of their time, bringing about a sense of being trapped. Reflecting on this issue resulted in a heartfelt expression of relief on Katherine's part that her 'time' was done.

The most positive theme to emerge from Katherine's account of working life in the infant school was a strong sense of close community and friendship between colleagues. Indeed, she was planning to dine out with former colleagues later in the day of our first interview, some 3 years after having left the school.

Because we were a small staff, we had great fun, we really did... The Head Teacher was really good. You would hear her laughing. It was such a happy school. You would hear her laughter from one end of the school to the other. It was lovely to be there. I don't think there are schools like that now.

Katherine went so far as to validate not taking on supply work after her resignation in terms of lack of community, and the insider/outsider dichotomy:

Never gave it a second thought, no way. I would never fancy going into a strange school.

So strong was this sense of community that when the post of Senior Teacher was introduced, Katherine was prevailed upon by her colleagues to take the position in order to maintain and protect their environment:

I was a senior teacher – but I was forced into that. I didn't want to be. But I was told 'If you don't, we'll have to get an outsider to come in'. So my arms were tied up my back.

Like her 'decision' to teach, her 'decision' to accept promotion was a result of direction from others. And yet, the joint 'action' of the women staff in this matter could be said to represent an *esprit de corps* among women, who find space to maintain a nurturing and safe environment by resisting changes, however covertly. The insular nature of this school community is further evidenced by their apparent unconsciousness of the wider educational context as seen above.

After this Head Teacher's departure, Katherine and her colleagues worked under a series of Acting Heads who, despite being female and situated within the school, did

not appear to share in the community of women, but rather were constructed as 'other' and remained 'outsiders':

Then the last 5 years I had a series of Acting Heads.. They hadn't a clue. They were trying to run the school their way, but it would have been a lot easier for them to fit in with us. But they wanted to change things around and there was a lot of aggro.

These Acting Heads seem to represent for the narrator an unwelcome intrusion into the private and cosseted space of school and classroom. Again, one might argue that, what they were perceived to represent – the 'masculinised' agenda for change – was constructed as posing a danger to the safe, feminised work spaces so carefully maintained by Katherine and her colleagues. Their response to this perceived threat seemed to be to close draw closer together as a bond of women, engaging in a shared rhetoric of nostalgia and disillusion. But this was limited to mutual comfort in adversity rather than mobilisation towards resistance.

Katherine's account strongly emphasised what might be called 'the grind' of Primary teaching as work. She stressed the physical exhaustion, particularly with advancing years, and the repetitive demands that are both physically exacting and psychologically draining.

Its hard, hard work, physically and mentally – infants. It's hard going physically – you are tying shoelaces; you're bending down, standing up, brushing hair. You're doing everything for them. Coats on, coats off, bags on. Its non-stop. Every single day. I used to be so tired. Mentally as well - I used to be working here nights. I can't do that at my age. I've had enough.

Her account of the incident which ended her career is in itself a rich narrative, told in detail which builds for the hearer a clear sense of the effects on this woman of an accumulation of minor irritants.

There was one child who – he got my dinger, he really did. It wasn't his fault, poor child. He was always in trouble.... and he was just getting me down. And on this day – the last day – we were told we had to keep an eye on the children at the pegs, because they had put in a new pegged area and it was so cramped that the classes had to go in 2 classes at a time. So they were coming in from outside, and, if it was your turn to go to the peg area, fine. If not you went into your classroom, waited until the peg area was clear, and then you could go out and take off the coats, hang up the bags and change the shoes. As soon as the children had taken off their shoes, they had to go back to the classroom, but you had to keep an eye on both areas. You had to be at the pegs and you had to be in the classroom, because we had a few kickers.

And this lad in particular – he was a big lad, a bonny boy – and his shoes had double knots and I could not get these knots undone. Eventually I heard a colleague passing and I said – ‘Can you come and help me please? I can’t hack it any more’. And she said ‘Away for a coffee then’. And I said ‘No. I’ve had enough. I just want out of here’. So I did, I went. I said, ‘I’ll go to the doctor but I’m not going back to the classroom. I’m not.’ And I didn’t.

Katherine simultaneously portrayed that day’s events as something that ‘happened’ rather than a deliberate act, and yet, seemed to feel that some explanation was needed for what was seen as action out of character:

Well, I’m a really calm, quiet person and I’ve never caused any aggro before so.... some of the other teachers were upset about it. But I’d had enough.

This story might be understood in different ways. On one reading, the arbitrary rules imposed by management, the whole ritual of lining children up for ingress and egress, the space and noise implications of this, low-level behavioural issues, and the routine manual tasks of coat fastening and shoe-lace-knot undoing eventually drove her to announce her inability to ‘hack-it’ further, and she left her job, and her career, in the middle of a school day.

This account might also be understood as illustrative of the embodied nature of Primary teaching, or of teaching as physical labour. In a sense, the final straw for Katherine was the unbearable, back-breaking toll on her body - the very physical demands of bending and un-knotting alongside the need to be ever physically present and watchful: in this case, in two places at once. In the infant classroom, the body is the main vehicle towards children, and teachers’ stories resonate with references both to the physical heaviness of teaching, and to the inevitable physical closeness, almost sensuality, of human interaction with little children.

And there is the sense, too, of imprisonment – the need to escape – to be out – the sense of being in a *walled-in and guarded* place (Bronte in Steedman, 1985).

Yet, what is most intriguing for me here is that Katherine does not seem to feel it necessary to attribute the events of this day to factors outwith the care of children.

Although there were many contributing circumstances, the last straw for her, ultimately, was a child.

There was this one boy – he got my dinger, he really did.

This seems to deviate from the dominant discourse of loving the children but hating the bureaucracy. She narrates her story in a way that does not attempt to avoid the discomfort of presenting herself in ways that are not conventionally feminine.

Again, it is interesting to consider the seeming absence of reflective decision-making in Katherine's account. The end of her career, like the start, was something that happened, not something which was planned for. Yet it brought great relief:

I just thought 'Phew'. I didn't have the work to do at night. I can do all the things I've wanted to do. I've plenty to do. I play golf, bowling, just whatever. I never, ever contemplated going back. I can afford to stay off school and I'm going to. I'm not putting myself through that. I never, ever thought that would happen to me, but it did.

The telling of this narrative – the story of her final day at school – stood out from the rest of the interview data in terms both of its poignancy, and of the creative and aesthetic way in which it was told. Clearly, this tale was not merely a response to my questions, but rather the recitation of a 'well-worn story', the compression of a pivotal and momentous part of her life into one moment of self-narration.

At Home - Life As A Wife And Mother

For Katherine as a woman, gender seems to have been an over-determining factor in her life trajectory. She was assigned a career deemed suitable for a girl, and future mother. She taught in her hometown before she married, then moved to her husband's hometown and had to find work again. She interrupted her career to have children, returning to school on supply when her children were at nursery. In recent years her mother has moved to be near her, and to be cared for by her (although she, the mother, also has a son). There is no suggestion that these decisions were difficult, nor indeed that they were 'decisions' at all. Rather they are presented as 'natural' and inevitable life-stages:

I met Bill through here when we were at college, then we got engaged. I went home to save money. There was a group of us who all got work in the same school... I was just there for a year and then we got married. Came back through here after the honeymoon and went into the office and asked if there were any teaching jobs available with infants, and they offered me 5! So I ...chose [name of school] and I was there for 2-and-a-half years... before I left to have the family....

Her story is one which privileged gender identities over other identities in that she read events and turning points in her life through the framework of gender. The reasons she gave for returning to teaching owed everything to her identities as a mother and homemaker and nothing to her identity as a teacher, or to any felt need for self-actualisation or personhood outwith the domestic role:

I was a teacher to get money to keep the family going. I spent my superannuation when Fiona was born. Foolish I know. I spent it on a washing machine to wash her nappies. All our age group, we would just work to get pin money for holidays and anything extra was for the house. That was how we thought then. I think I really quite enjoyed it. I did enjoy it. Being paid for it was fine and it fitted into family life: it was good that way. As the kids got older, it didn't matter that I was working longer hours and then they were off my hands anyway. It was fine.

This accords with the notion that, in our society, career and family are oppositionally constructed for women.

Within her own home, Katherine describes a relatively egalitarian division of household chores:

Well, I do the cooking, I usually do the washing but Bill will do it now and again and he will hang out the washing... I went home the other day and he had the Hoover out. He was going from one room to the next room. I thought I must be a right messy soul. I will say to him 'Oh, I shall have to do the lounge. We have got folk coming' or something. He will do it. If he is not doing anything else he will, and every chair and every piece of furniture is moved. And he will do it far more thoroughly than me. What else? He always cuts the grass; I have never, ever cut the grass in my life. I clean the car, but he'll sometimes do it. He cuts the bushes, I do the weeding ...

The impression given was of a default position in which indoor household chores were hers, although her husband was willing to do them at times (if he wasn't doing anything else!). Her perception that he did the house-work to a higher standard than her is interesting too, almost as if any implied threat to his masculinity which housework might carry, is compensated for by the technical precision with which he

undertakes the tasks. She seems, albeit unwittingly, to equate femininity with poor performance and to subscribe to the hegemonic belief that what women can do, men can do better when they put their minds to it, even if that activity is conventionally feminised.

However, when asked about child care when her children were young, Katherine described that very firmly as **her** role as a mother:

That was really my job but he would do it on the odd occasion... He works shifts as well, so I was the one who got up through the night with the kids.... I know I was tired with the kids at home through the day as well, and Bill would be working, but it was my job to get up to and see to them.

Further, she expressed extreme reservations about the way in which the next generation – her son and his wife – divided these responsibilities:

Nowadays, it's turn-about, turn-about. I can't hack this. I think it's awful. Well, Philip and Norma take turn-about, and I just think – Philip's been working all day – although Norma has as well – I can see both sides. Norma took the kids up to her mother's and she had had a week up there and Philip drove up on the Friday, straight after his work. He got up there to find Mary (his 5 year old daughter) greeting him at the door. This was half nine or something. She should have been in her bed. He had to go and lie down with her to get her over to sleep in her single bed, and she didn't settle until about three o'clock... Every time you speak to him – 'I am shattered'... Philip will cook and do other jobs around the house as well, but Norma doesn't do anything. Gardening, painting, all these jobs are Philip's jobs. I always think he has got a raw deal. But it's their lives.

Despite the (relatively) egalitarian distribution of household chores which she reports, therefore, Katherine betrays very fixed notions of the 'naturalness' of mothering which are clearly central to her understanding of her (past) self as a woman. But, like her understanding of herself as a teacher, the picture she paints of the mother's role was that of inevitable duty, rather than a calling or vocation. She does not narrate motherhood in terms of pleasure and fulfilment.

Her construction of the male role is that of provider whose status as such should not be disrupted by sharing in the mechanics of child rearing. The fact that her son is not, in her view, accorded this status in his home is deeply problematic for her. It is interesting that the story she tells is of her son and the 'unnatural' expectations his

wife has of him. She does not share stories of her daughter (who is also a working mother) or her burdens in relation to the work/ child-rearing balance.

In Church - Life as a Woman of Faith

Katherine was brought up within the Free Church of Scotland, in one of the larger Highland congregations. Her mother was a member of this church, although her father did not attend this, nor any other church.

This topic was not introduced by myself initially, and Katherine made no mention whatsoever of church or faith in the first interview. I surmised that this avoidance may have been due to an anticipation on her part of a disapproval on mine of her current disassociation with church. It may also have been due to her own sense of discomfort and irresolution with this area of her lived experience.

In the second interview, however, she was a little more forthcoming. I introduced the topic tentatively by asking about the place of religion in schools. She described her school's practice of going to church once a term, and visits from the minister to school assemblies, in a very positive way, but was less positive about the requirement to teach other world religions, especially to children in the Early Years:

Latterly we would talk about Muslims and different religions, but I don't know. I never thought the kids understood it at all. It was away above their heads.

This led to a discussion about the merits and demerits of promoting Christianity above other faiths in state schools, in which she described Christianity in terms of its being a cultural norm for Scottish families. It could be argued that this is due to the conceptual association between Presbyterianism and Scottishness which is particularly strong in the realm of schooling. Further, (as seen below in Katherine's account of Sunday School) for those from Free Church backgrounds, the early emphasis on learning theology to a high cognitive standard, establishes a link between learning and religion.

In the course of this discussion, she used the phrase, 'those who are not believers', in a way which might suggest that she considered herself to be a 'believer'. At the very least, she did seem to associate herself with Christianity in the context of consideration of other religious positions, including atheism.

She owned, when asked, to having been brought up within the Free Church of Scotland:

Well, my mother went to the Free Church and we went there as well as children. We used to go quite regularly... and I would even sit through the Gaelic with her.

As a child, she would attend the Morning Service and then go to Sunday School, which ran, not concurrently as most do today, but end-on to the service. 'Sitting through the Gaelic' refers to attending the Gaelic service which would run end-on to the evening English service. Given that Gaelic services tend to be lengthy, this represents many hours in total. But it was a role strongly expected of her up to the point where she left home:

I just felt I had to go, I had to go to church, I think that's how my brother felt as well: forced on us sort of thing... I think what I didn't like about it was I remember a Sunday School teacher, and talk about a bore – learning the catechism, learning the verses, I got fed-up of it. I really did. We had lovely people, but there was nothing exciting there at all, you know, for children. It's not like today: there was nothing. You just sat in little groups in the church itself in the pew, teacher would be beside you and you had to rattle off all your homework that you'd learned the week before, your psalm and catechism.

There is here more than merely a conceptual association between Presbyterianism and Scottish-ness. For Katherine, her core marker of Scottish-ness – the Gaelic tradition – is a tangible part of her lived experience of religion. Despite the fact that her identity as a Scot is more current and less problematic than her identity as a Presbyterian, the association between Scottish-ness and Presbyterianism is more real than imagined.

Although I did not ask directly, for it seemed indelicate and counter-cultural, I assume that Katherine did not 'come forward' in her mother's church: that is to say, she did not experience religious conversion or come into communicant membership.

Had she been a Free Church member, it would have been expected that she would attend the Free Church congregation in Aberdeen as a student (indeed even as an adherent, that would have been the expectation). But it seems that she did not. Katherine went on to talk about her current non-affiliation to church, not in terms of a definite decision to reject faith, or this form of faith, but rather as a practice that has become habitual: something that those within the faith culture might refer to as 'falling away'.

I don't know. Since I have come back here... I don't go regularly. I go to [name of the local Church of Scotland congregation] I go there, but I am not a regularly goer, and my brother doesn't go at all, much to my mother's disgust.

Katherine's one-time membership of this culture means that she was sensitised to the multiple meanings of belonging, of rejecting and of 'falling away', and how these positioned herself and her brother. I sensed that she was uncomfortable with this subject matter, perhaps being uncertain of my own position in relation to these communities of faith.

Further into the interview, we discussed her mother's current relationship with the Free Church congregation in the city. She is a member of this congregation, but currently has no way of getting there for Sunday services. Katherine, whose devotion to her mother is evidenced by her daily visits, expresses something of the inner conflict she experiences in facing the dilemma whether or not she should take her mother to worship in the Free Church:

And I know I could take her, I could, but once I start it... I don't mind doing it now and again, I would do it, but I know if I start it, its just going to be aggro. I have said to her, 'If you want to go to church I will take you, and I will pick you up', and I never hear anything. I would do it, I would do it... She just needs somebody with her. It's confidence, that's what it is. I would take her, but she knows I wouldn't necessarily go in with her, so it would be a case of taking her and going back for her, so she's obviously not happy with that. She would rather come with me to [name of the local Church of Scotland congregation].

This betrays a strong sense that she, Katherine, feels that she ought to go with her mother to the Free Church, and an acknowledgement that the reason her mother does not agree to this is that she knows Katherine will not actually attend worship with

her. Katherine offers no objection to attending Christian worship in principle (indeed owns to being an occasional attender at the Church of Scotland, at her own instigation):

I mean, I would be the one here that would say, 'Here, we will go to church today'. It wouldn't enter Mike's head, but he will come along. But I am always the instigator.

Katherine is clearly aware of various cultural meanings associated with physical attendance at worship in different faith communities and this creates a tensions for her. She is faced with the problem of preserving a sense of self as a woman of some (if somewhat problematic) faith through tenuous connection to two faith communities without tangible membership of either.

There is an interesting (and some would say 'providential') sequel to the story of Katherine's relationship to the Free Church of Scotland. Her son became a part of the Free Church community initially through attending summer children's camps with a neighbour, who was his friend and class-mate at school. When he left home, he started to attend one of the Free Church congregations in southern Scotland, and is now a deacon there. When I mentioned this, Katherine she seemed surprised:

Is that right? You see I don't know, Philip doesn't tell me all that he does in the church, but I know he is...doing a lot.

The clear lack of communication between mother and son on this matter is suggestive of two points. First, it highlights again Katherine's awareness of her 'fallen away' status, rendering her own relationship to the faith of her childhood problematic, and causing a sense of fracture between her positioning and his. Secondly, it is indicative of the disinclination characteristic of Highland Presbyterianism to talk about matters of faith, even (or perhaps especially) within close family relationships.

Katherine betrayed little awareness of, or interest in, the women's movement. She cannot remember any impact on her life of second wave feminism in the 60s and 70s, and when asked whether should would, or had ever, thought of herself as a feminist, she replied:

No. I just wouldn't think about it at all.

She had no awareness of ever having been discriminated against as a woman, and didn't think her daughter had experienced such either. When I suggested that her career choice (or the one her mother had made for her) was heavily influenced by her gender she replied:

I suppose so. We couldn't do engineering or that. But as far as I'm concerned it hasn't made any difference. If I had my life over again, I don't think I would really want to be an engineer.

So it is unsurprising that Katherine's lack of association with the church of her childhood did not appear, on the face of things, to owe anything to the positioning of women within Evangelical Presbyterian communities in Scotland. Well through the second interview, Katherine asked me directly about my own position in relation to the church and I answered in terms of my sense of frustration and marginalisation as a woman. Her response was simply to ask '*What do you mean?*'. Her knowledge of the structure and theology of the Free Church of Scotland would certainly suggest an understanding of the exclusion of women from office. However, given that Katherine's close association to the Church ended when she was a very young woman, she could not be expected to identify with the lived experience of existing as a mature adult woman within the constraints of that cultural environment.

At no point over the two interviews did Katherine talk directly about faith or lack of faith. But when I suggested that her background was inevitably identity-shaping she agreed:

Its still in there...I'd agree

Indeed, her somewhat entrenched position on the duties of motherhood may itself owe something to the doctrine of separate spheres for women and men in the 'natural' (God-man-woman) order which is both historical and current in conservative Evangelical discourses.

Conclusion

Katherine's account suggests to me that she did not seem to strive to make sense and value of her work. I sensed a huge relief on her part that she was no longer teaching. Apart from the very positive stories she told of camaraderie and bonding with

woman colleagues, there seemed almost a sense of worthlessness in her account of her life's work. That absence of a sense of personal fulfilment and self-actualisation through teaching, was mirrored in her account of mothering.

In some senses she was the shyest and least forth-coming of the women I spoke to. Her account was punctuated by interjections such as *I'm sure this is no use to you*. Yet, in other ways, she was the one who left herself most exposed, by the frankness of her recollections. She tended to narrate her account in a way which did not attempt to avoid discomfort, being willing to recount painful stories without recourse to resolutions. There were many dissonances within her identities as teacher, mother and Christian, which appeared to remain unresolved.

JESSIE'S STORY

Biographical Overview

Jessie was born in 1955 and was brought up on a farm in Moray in the north-east of Scotland with two brothers, one of them her twin. Another brother and sister were considerably older than her and had left home while she was very young. Her father and mother were farmers, both from the north-east area. Jessie and her siblings attended Sunday-School at the local Church of Scotland, where her parents were regular, but not weekly, attenders.

In 1972 Jessie left home to live in Aberdeen where she attended the College of Education to study for a Diploma in Primary Education. She stayed in Halls of Residence initially, later sharing a flat with other students. She qualified in 1975 and took up her first teaching appointment in a village on the east coast south of Aberdeen, in August of that year, just one month shy of her twentieth birthday. The following year she moved to a small Primary school on Deeside, also in Aberdeenshire, where she remained for two years.

In 1978 Jessie married Keith, a farmer, and in this year also secured a fully-paid secondment to study at Aberdeen College of Education, for an Associateship in Early Years (previously known as the Froebel). Having successfully achieved this qualification, in 1979 she took up post as a nursery teacher at a large Primary school in Aberdeen city, where she remained for three years, moving to another inner-city school for one term before the birth, three months prematurely, of her twin daughters.

There followed a period of hospitalisation due to complications arising from the premature births. When the twins were discharged, Jessie and her family moved from Aberdeen to her husband's family farm in north Aberdeenshire. Jessie remained at home with her daughters for 8 years before returning to supply teaching around 1990. She worked part-time as a supply teacher for 9 years before securing a part-time permanent job in a Nursery class in a nearby town.

In 2005, both children having left home, Jessie and her husband returned to Aberdeen where Keith matriculated at Aberdeen University to study nursing. Jessie returned to teaching full time (her first full-time employment in 23 years) in order to fund her husband's study. In late 2006 (between the dates of our first and second interview), one of Jessie's twin daughters was involved in a very serious road traffic accident which left her with considerable impairment. On release from hospital, this daughter moved back into the family home, and, at the time of the second interview, was being cared for by Jessie's husband while Jessie continued to teach full time.

I interviewed Jessie twice, first in May 2006 when the interview lasted one hour and 48 minutes, and again in August 2007 when the interview lasted one hour and 46 minutes.

At School – Life As A Woman Teacher

Throughout the interviews, Jessie narrates a strong desire to teach, stemming from childhood. She considered other careers, albeit within a narrow and gendered range, and applied to other courses in addition to teacher-education (domestic science and social work), but insisted that *teaching was always my first choice*. She refers to her father's negative attitude to the alternative career options but insists that she was not significantly influenced by parental pressures, or merely internalising familial or societal expectations. She describes herself as *a born teacher* with a high sense of vocation, insisting that, even given the wider options available today, particularly for women, she would still choose to teach.

Jessie describes a state of youth and naivety at the time of leaving home to begin her Initial Teacher Education. There is a sense in which this was a huge life-changing experience moving, around the age of 17, from her parental home in a rural area to independence in city life. The enormity of this transition is nicely narrated by her in the following anecdote:

I was very naive. One of my friends was from the Black Isle and we went out one night to buy second-hand books. Then we must have gone for a drink or something because we went to catch the last bus home. And unbeknown to either of us, if you got onto the bus on the wrong side of the street, it was going a different direction. So we ended up down at the beach – and we were saying to each other 'Where's this bus going?' But it was the Number 5 so it must be going to Queens Road. So we got to the beach and the chap said 'Where are you going?' and we said 'Queen's Road'. He actually took us back up to the Halls of Residence which was amazing – they wouldnae do that now. But he said 'You must remember to get on at the right side of the road'. He must have laughed for a week about that. But neither of us were aware because out in the country you just get on the bus.

Jessie has a relatively positive view of how her Initial Teacher Education fitted her for life as a teacher. She does not appear to experience that sense of purposelessness that other respondents report:

I think the course was actually quite comprehensive. Maybe I was just very lucky with tutors, but I thought I got quite a good grounding.

She also had a high regard for the post-qualifying course – the 'Froebel', or Associate-ship in Early Education, insisting that the tutors *knew their stuff*. Yet, again, there is little sense that her experience of higher education itself was life-changing. There is no sense of intellectual awakening or transformation at a personal level, during either her initial or her post-qualifying studies. Rather, she seems to regard her own education as merely fitting her for life in the classroom, and doesn't appear to wish for more than this.

It was very much geared to teaching I would say...but that was what I wanted, so it was never an issue.

She constructs a dichotomy between the practical skills of teaching, and what is perceived to be the academic nature of higher education:

It's not because I'm highly academic. It's because I have a way with children, and I think kids deserve the best chance.... and I would say it was always the skill of teaching, the practical side, that was my strength. I mean writing essays.... I never failed one I don't think. But that wasn't the side of it that excited me.

Her emphasis on experiential knowledge is sustained throughout her narrative.

Jessie narrates a sense of not being up to the job initially, as a probationer. In her first job, she recalls a local authority advisor who was helpful and supportive of her

as a probationer. She has a high regard for officials in education, whose role it was to offer guidance.

The 'liking children' discourse emerges very strongly throughout Jessie's narrative:

I'm not driven to work because I want a fancier house or a new car or free holidays or... I work because I like working with children.

She makes many, many references to the central importance of the child and of 'putting children first'. She repeatedly asserts that the child's happiness is the most important thing. When I suggested that her story of her life as a teacher was one of the more positive ones I'd heard, she responded thus:

Which is sad! You know, I've heard of various folk of my age saying they've put people off teaching. And I think 'How dare you?'

Jessie seems reluctant to allow other women teachers to speak about their discontent at being in the company of children. Indeed, throughout her narrative she carefully and actively maintains the discourse of the child's happiness as the only valid consideration.

Jessie's account suggests a high awareness of current policy including Curriculum for Excellence, for which she has high hopes. She speaks of the 'wonderful opportunity' afforded to current student teachers who will 'grow with' the new policy. Jessie identifies very closely with Early Years, seeing herself as something of a specialist in this area, due in large part to her post-qualifying course, the Associateship in Early Education, which positioned her in high demand for nursery positions:

And at that time it was only people with the Associate-ship who had a nursery qualification. Mainstream teachers didn't have that. And a lot of my time since then has been in nursery because there are still shortages of, dare I say it, real nursery specialists, as opposed to teachers who have been told 'You are doing nursery'.... It was accepted when they seconded you that they would put you into a position where you could use the course, and obviously that was going to be nursery to start with, because there were so few people doing nursery qualifications.

Despite her comparatively high regard for the movers and shakers in education however, of all the accounts in the study, Jessie's presents the most evidence of 'resistance' to the demands and dictates of hierarchy. This is seen at various points

in the narrative, the earliest being her account of persuading colleagues during her probation year to report the Head Teacher's continuing alcoholic binges:

The Head-Teacher was an alcoholic. It was like something out of a Carry On film – quite incredible.... I mean, he was ill. He spent quite a lot of time out of school ... The Head-Teacher clearly should not have been there, and I had the room next to him. The infant teacher had been there for years and out of some misguided loyalty used to come in in the morning and look for bottles in all his hidey holes... Eventually, I persuaded the staff that we owed it to the children to report it, and we reported the whole thing.

Notwithstanding Jessie's positive accounts of Initial and Post-qualifying Teacher Education, and her high regard for HE staff as professionals, she does recount the abuse of power by some HE staff, and narrates her resistance to that abuse which, although it occurred only after the power relationship had ended, still represents a very deliberate act of resistance:

Had a terrible tutor called Miss Dickson – she knew what she was about, but she was quite unfair. But I went at the end of the course and told her, I've learned a huge amount from her, but some of the ways in which she treated us as professionals was akin to bullying. She was terrible. She came into my class and told me the chairs were the wrong height, and the tables. Literally, you were expected to change everything in your classroom in a month, which was quite unfair to the kids, but it was quite unrealistic for any teacher. I said to her, 'Constructive criticism I could take and would benefit from. But criticism just for the sake of it at that level was unacceptable'. But I waited until my name was up on the notice-board as a Pass before I did it.

Jessie spoke of her Associateship as 'empowering' in that it enabled her to resist pressures to move towards more formal teaching of literacy in nursery settings:

I have to say the Associate-ship gave me the confidence not to be under pressure. Children of 3 and 4 should not be under any sort of pressure... I think if you're doing a good job as a nursery practitioner, the nitty-gritty of how to write letters and numbers doesn't come into the equation very often.

Similarly, she recounts a situation which arose while she was doing Learning Support on supply:

I did Learning Support supply for a while and I had a child who was very poor and the Head-Teacher wanted to know what I was going to do with him. And I said, quite simply, 'I'm not going to 'do' anything with him'. The poor kid's doing his level-best here. He may well be like his brother and be in P3 before it begins to make a bit of sense to him. What was the point of giving him a reading-book and pressurising him when you might as well give him one in Chinese?

Her account gives the impression that her practice is a reasonably close fit with her ideals. She speaks of refusing to assess children in ways that might undermine their confidence, and of not wavering from her position:

Probably because I did the Associate-ship, and because it's always been Early Years I've worked at, I've always managed to resist that kind of pressure whether it be in P1, P2, or 3 or Nursery. I'm never going to go out of a school thinking that I've spoiled a child's childhood because of some target or some inspector or whatever. I've always expected a child to give me their best, as my parents did. If I know a child's given me their level-best, even if it's just dire, I don't mind. I tell that child I'm pleased they've given me their best. I stick to that and I'll not be wavered from it.

She talks about embracing the best of change, and there is no sense of her being ground down by it:

I would say, with change, that I just embrace the best of change and hold on to what's me.

Jessie does not appear to struggle between silence and voice in ways which are often reported in other narratives of teacher resistance. Ultimately, Jessie understands her own resistance as part of her professionalism, rather than as a symptom of un-professionalism. This seems closely linked, in her understanding, to the centrality of the child to teaching-as-work:

I would actually question anything for the kids... It's not because I think 'Not another hour's work'. It's because, you know, where does the child fit into this 'cause that's why I'm in teaching.

Even the reporting of the Head Teacher is ultimately *for the sake of the children*.

She offers no tales of resistance outwith this paradigm, no narratives of resistance to gendered or other social norms, no struggles for agency for its own sake.

Jessie describes the burgeoning paper-work later in her career and how this detracted from working with children. She relates the irony of the autonomy of her early years as a clue-less 20 year old compared to the pressure on her as an experienced teacher to produce 'evidence' that her work is satisfactory, judged by measurable criteria of productivity and output:

We each had a notebook – not even A4 size – and I used to write about 3 sides every month in that notebook and that was my record of work. With one

year's experience that was deemed to be enough to prove that I could do my job, and now with 30 years experience I have to produce reams of stuff, and evaluations and evidence. Now I believe that there should be accountability, and I think at that time it was probably too minimal. But the extremes now – it's just quite bizarre, the difference.

It is interesting, however, that, despite the fact that she has worked mostly in part-time and supply situations which one might regard as disempowering, she gives the impression of enjoying a good deal of autonomy. Nursery settings perhaps retain a degree of autonomy lost to Primary, and also tend to have retained a more child-centred rationale in sync with Jessie's ideals, but there are further layers to her seeming empowerment. She seems to me to 'buy into' or even take ownership of the system, using what we might call 'good-teacher' discourse. At the same time she appears not to experience the sense of powerlessness which is so characteristic of many teachers' accounts, but offers such resistance as described above in order to protect her own autonomy.

Jessie's narrative, despite her positive experience of teaching, suggests some disappointment in career terms. Perhaps her high view of her own professional worth sits uneasily with the fact that she never achieved promotion. She attributes her one reported dissatisfaction with teaching to her inability to perform well at interviews:

Possibly not getting opportunities that I might have liked... and it's interesting because you are saying that, you know, there's that obvious huge confidence in teaching. But when it comes to interviews, that never comes across. Total disaster area at interviews... Uhuh, the jobs I am in, the jobs that I get, are jobs that people have seen what I am capable of prior to interview, all the way along the line.

Of all the accounts, Jessie's provides the least evidence of what I have termed 'the grind'. When asked directly about this in the second interview, she did acknowledge that she might have experienced this had she been forced to teach further up the school. But she tended to suggest that experiencing teaching in this way, experiencing 'the grind', was something that came with the woman, rather than with the job:

There is pressure in teaching, I don't, I'm not minimising it. But probably if you took forty percent of that [sic] women and put them into any job, they would feel like that.

Another absence from the narrative is any data which would allow for an exploration of the embodied nature of Primary teaching. As a nursery teacher with a high view of the child's individuality, there must have been much experience of the physical closeness of human interaction with little children. That this is not expressed in the account may have something to do with the way in which Jessie chooses to construct her professionalism as an Early Years expert, and her understanding of the sensual or physical as somehow outwith or contrary to the professional. Indeed, the discourse of professionalism which Jessie adopts is not inscribed with the language necessary for teachers to understand or articulate their work as embodied labour. The language of agency which is strong in Jessie's narrative, is one which disembodies her. Only where teachers move outside this discourse, for example, in expressing 'the grind' of teaching, does such conceptualisation, the notion of teaching as 'bodywork', become possible.

Unlike other respondents, Jessie has little to say about her relationships with colleagues. Perhaps this is a reflection of a career which involved much part-time and supply work, and work in nursery settings where contact with other teachers is sometimes minimal. There is a tendency in her narrative for her to seem critical of colleagues. For example, when discussing the experiences of student teachers in schools she expressed this concern:

If you get a student who has, dare I say it, a jaded middle-aged teacher harping on about everything for eight weeks what does that do for them?

When, in the second interview, I asked her directly about bonds with colleagues she answered thus:

On a personal level, I only bond with teachers that are there for the children and they are positive... I will go home and moan about teachers who come into the staff-room criticising a child.

Although her accounts are rich with evidence of her need to nurture, for Jessie, nurture is something that is provided directly by herself, rather than in the context of a nurturing community. The teacher/pupil relationship, rather than the nurturing

community, is central. In this way, she does not appear to use her story to claim group membership and does not appear to enjoy the sense of community within school cultures which is experienced as enrichment by some women teachers.

When asked how her relative autonomy – her willingness to resist – was understood and responded to by colleagues she said

I've had colleagues say 'But you can't just say'.

She sees the unwillingness of colleagues to mirror her resistance as,

one of the flaws of a lot of women, certainly as they get older.

However, the absence of that sense of *esprit de corps* with women colleagues is striking: as striking as her accounts of autonomy, and the absence of 'the grind'.

Why has she not achieved this, nor felt the need for it? Is the autonomy she appears to have achieved bought at the price of close relationship with colleagues?

At Home – Life As A Wife And Mother

Jessie is very matter-of-fact about the place of teaching in her wider life. There is a strong sense of her having chosen her domestic circumstances. She does not seem to deify or hallow being a wife and mother, to elevate them above teaching, but she does make it clear that, at some points in her life she has had to choose between them. The choice, unlike that of other participants was a conscious one:

You're asking 'How has it impacted on my family life and on my social life?' It hasn't. I didn't go back to full-time teaching because I don't think I have got what it takes to be the sort of wife, teacher and mother I want to be all at the same time. I can be a good wife and mother at the same time. I can be a good mother and teacher at the same time. I can be a good teacher and wife. But to do them all full-time, I don't have what it takes. So I didn't try. I always want to enjoy my work and I want that to be obvious to the children. And, equally, there was no way it was going to impact on my family life because I had chosen to have family.

So, in a sense, Jessie's working life is, if anything, even more impacted by being a wife and mother than those of the other respondents. Gender has indeed been an over-determining factor in her life trajectory. But for her, this has happened in a more conscious way. There is much more of a sense of reflective decision-making on her part. She regards having a family as a positive decision rather than a natural

and inevitable life-stage. And yet, in this account, despite its sense of personal agency, career and family remain oppositionally constructed for women:

And I always said I didn't have it in me to be a full-time mother, a full-time wife and a full-time teacher... because when my kids were growing up I gave them what I wanted to give them as growing children.

Unlike other respondents, Jessie didn't employ cross-references between caring for children at home and at school, nor did she allude to the importance of being a mother for understanding school-children and their parents. Although she takes great pride in her parenting skills, Jessie resists suggestions of links between mothering and teaching:

As a mother it sometimes annoyed me that people would say to me, 'I know you're a teacher because the jigsaws were in boxes with labels'. There are people who are not teachers who do that for their children. And I think, if I had done something completely different, I would have been the same kind of parent as I was.

In this sense, it seems that Jessie narrates a more masculinised construction of teaching as work. In some senses she reveres nurture above all else, but that nurture is narrated as professional rather than as womanly. She consciously claims not to be the Froebelian 'mother made conscious'. Perhaps this is bound up in the oppositional construction of work and mothering which, because she chose not to do both simultaneously, need not be reconciled for her, as it needs to be for other participants.

Jessie's response to questions of feminism is perhaps the area in which she shares most in common with the other respondents, and indeed with other Scottish women. Although she was in her teens and twenties in the 1970s, Jessie recollects no engagement with the women's movement. She didn't see the problem:

As a twin with a twin-brother, I never ever felt that my future was any less important to my parents than my brother's, ever... In fact, it was equally important. It always was, you know... Aye, no, I don't think that was ever an issue at all in the home.

However, she does go on to describe a somewhat gendered community life during childhood:

Very traditional, Uhuh. Yeah, I would have said, I mean it was very much a farming community, and the wives stayed at home and did the shopping and

did everything. And the men, you know...

She also described a home-life which, albeit less markedly so than others of the time and place, was gendered in traditional ways.

My dad's a very courteous, old-fashioned farmer, you know.... You know, my brothers were brought up to always be courteous to all women, regardless of anything about that woman, you know. You were courteous and you opened doors and you helped them and you were never rude to women. And so there were three boys and two girls at home in the family. But we were all treated very equally and, you know, all encouraged to do the best.

She describes a childhood in which she worked alongside her brothers on the farm, and in which her brothers were expected to do their share of household chores (although not ironing!). She describes a father who, despite his somewhat traditional views on chivalry, would change the occasional nappy. But as an adult, in her own home, she admitted to following a more traditional role than her husband:

Yeah, actually, probably I'm more traditional in that respect than he is. You know, I never think to go out and look at the car or... I don't do anything of that sort. Whereas, basically, he does anything in the house... Over this last year [since her daughter's road accident] he's done some of the most basic tasks, washed some of Katherine's horrendous washing. And, you know, he does everything and anything. And sometimes, you know, Katherine and Helen will say things like, if they have friends, with boyfriends and things, 'Do you know what he said?' and 'Do you know what she did for him? Ha, well I wouldn't be doing that'. And I think 'Ooh maybe that's just a bit too much'. So probably I'm more traditional.

While she believed that domestic roles should be equally shared, she acknowledged that this is not always the way she has conducted her own marriage:

In the home the tasks should be shared, you know. I would say that's something that again ...I would not have expected. At that time, Keith was in a much more physical job. He was leaving at eight in the morning and coming home at six, seven at night. My expectations of him at that time in the home were nothing. Apart from, you know, emotionally and socially and psychologically. Because I was at home all day, I wasn't taking in an income. Therefore it would have been a bit rich to expect him to come home and do things if I have been around all day. So I think it's a sort of variable role.

At one level, Jessie is willing to acknowledge the importance of feminist endeavour, but within limitations which suggest that she understands gender in 'common-sense', or essentialist, ways.

I think it's very important. I think it's important that women are treated as equals in as much as they can be.

But she is keen to retain what she sees as male chivalry towards women:

But I don't think there's anything wrong, in fact... I would be horrified if Keith didn't open the door for me or thought 'Well she can do all these things for herself'. And I quite like being cosseted, actually.

Her complicity in (and even approval of) the acting-out of male strength and female vulnerability which are implied by such notions of gentlemanly behaviour, suggests the performance of particular femininities, the playing out of difference. Ultimately, she perceives feminist endeavour as something belonging to the past:

I would like to think everybody has moved on and it's a way of life now rather than something you have to fight about.

Thus she rejects the identity-politics of feminism.

In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith

Jessie's narrative is heavily imbued with notions of moral behaviour, very often associated by her with a high regard for children, and a repeated sense of the relative importance of goodness over attainment:

I've got the time to talk to children about how they are behaving towards other people, about the actual real things that matter. At the end of the day, whether you are highly academic or not academic, if you are courteous, you work hard, you've got manners, you care, you see past yourself, the circle of people you work with, or are around, will all be happier for it.

She sets this in the context of her relationship with her twin brother who, although he wasn't academic had the same *morals, values, principles and everything*.

Although she doesn't express her faith overtly in school, she sees Christianity as underpinning the principles and ethics described above, which in turn provide the moral impetus for her working life:

I think its important that I try to be like Jesus and I try to be, to listen, and try to be kind. And when I do things wrong, I say 'I'm sorry' and I try to put it right.... and a lot of the morals and principles, whilst I wouldn't be saying 'It tells you in the Bible to do this', that is what I'm putting into children.

She notes the increasing secularisation, even of north-east rural communities, and speculates on the moral impact this has on society:

And I would suspect that... despite people not seeing it as relevant, it has led to a lot of the 'me, me, me' society that we've got.... Because when we were growing up it was put in at home but it was emphasised at Sunday School and church and it was adhered to throughout the family, through the community.... where more and more now it's not adhered to at all. And... there are a lot of lonely, broken people out there, who maybe if they had adhered to it would have been able to deal with things in a different way.

She is fully supportive of the notion that Christianity is a cultural norm in Scotland and that as such the practices of Protestantism have a rightful place in non-denominational Scottish schools. This highlights again the conceptual association which exists in Scotland between Protestantism, particularly in its Presbyterian form, and schooling.

In the initial interview, she mentions involvement in Sunday School and other community endeavours such as Brownies. When asked directly in the second interview about church connections, she describes herself as having been brought up within the church (Church of Scotland) *to a point*.

I mean we all went to Sunday School, but not a highly, highly... It was important, but it didn't take over our lives... It was a way of life rather than our whole lives.

She describes the church as very much part of community life, with the minister visiting most households several times a year. Her parents attended church, but not weekly, due to the demands of the farm. Her grandparents, although also farmers, were more regular attenders. Even where faith is minimal, therefore, Jessie describes a culture in which Presbyterianism remains at least a nominal token of community life and identity.

There is a link in this account between Scottish language and the practice of Presbyterian religion. In describing the centrality of Doric to rural community life Jessie notes,

Everybody spoke it, from the doctor to the minister to the man who cleaned the roads.

This link further strengthens the association of Presbyterianism with community life.

Jessie seemed slightly embarrassed when asked about her own pattern of church attendance:

That's sort of, well fluctuated I would say. No...this is going to sound very, well how would I put this now? When the girls were growing up we had a very good minister at [name of parish] and we were weekly attenders. When we moved to [name of town] I would have probably have gone five times in eight weeks, sort of thing. I just didn't have the same rapport with the minister.

She describes her faith, and that of her daughter, Katherine, as

a very personal, practical, private faith.... not something she goes, you know, shouting from the rooftops.

I read her mild embarrassment at her perceived lack of church connection as arising from what she knows to be my mother's church affiliation and commitment. She seems both anxious to stress, and embarrassed to admit, that she does not share this commitment either in terms of emotional and time investment, or in terms of the way faith is popularly understood to be expressed within Evangelical church communities. Through this boundary work, Jessie negotiates a religious identity which defines her faith as genuine and authentic, but not extreme. She offered the following narrative to sum up her understanding of faith:

Recently I had a conversation with quite a troubled man... He's got post-traumatic stress disorder and all sorts of complications, but he said to me 'So why do you go to church and do you really think there's a God? Why do you go to church, Jessie?' I said 'Well, I go to church just to remind me how we ought to be behaving, how we ought to be talking to people, how we ought to be thinking about things. It keeps me on the straight and narrow, reminds me, you know, of what I have to be thankful for...'. So it's probably like everything else in my life. It's a much more practical faith... than something I go talking a lot to other people about.

Jessie informed me that her husband has no faith, but that her daughter, Katherine, who was involved in the car accident, has strong faith. We discussed the impact of Katherine's accident on the faith-positioning of both her daughters:

I mean she [Helen] was, last year, in New Zealand and we had to tell her this awful news. She said, 'You know, I've never been sure if I've believed in a God, and now, God, if you were really anything worthwhile, this would never happen to me'. And I said 'Well, that's just rubbish Helen, it's nothing to do with what's happened to you'. But she's very much following that pattern that she doubts it very much. Where Katherine has always, over the years... had a very, very strong, quiet faith. And I think it's had a lot to do with how she's coped with things.

I asked whether Katherine's accident had impacted on Jessie's own faith:

No. I remember as a younger person, when Keith's mother died, she was fifty-nine, died of cancer. I remember at that time thinking 'Well, you know, she spent a lot of her life in church, church-led activities. She was the most generous, giving person that you could come across. She would never have harmed anybody, so why? But that was just youth and naivety. So, no, I've never questioned my faith. I've never thought 'Why is this happening to me?' And, again, I remember once, in a London hospital when Katherine was a baby and really quite ill, and another woman whose baby was dying, and there were several, I mean, there were a lot of very ill children in the ward. And one evening there were three or four of us sat chatting. And this woman said 'Why me, why?' And another said 'Why not you? You know, why do you think that you should sail through life and everything will be...?'. And that words stuck, you know. If I could have avoided it for my daughter, I would have.

But, interestingly, it is within the context of church worship that Jessie finds most difficulty in coping with the circumstances of her daughter's accident:

Over the last year... I just couldn't cope with church. It was just too much for me. I just, emotionally, that was where, apart from the home, that was the one place where I was likely to not hold myself together, basically.

Although she has attended a number of Church of Scotland congregations over the years, Jessie doesn't feel the need for a current church connection to maintain her faith. Rather, faith is something she practices *within herself*. Her church 'lines' are still in her home parish, signifying perhaps the perceived connection between her rural home-community and faith.

I didn't at any point ask Jessie to describe who or what she believes in, or what exactly is the substance and nature of her faith. In response to her repeated assertion

that her faith was private and individual, (not to mention what we have established regarding the culture of silence in matters of personal faith) such a question would appear somewhat crass. There is a sense in which the substance of her faith is assumed to be common knowledge, the context of it being the Church of Scotland tradition. Yet the lack of any conversion-narrative in her account, the absence of any reference to prayer or to direct relationship with the divine, renders it very different in nature to the faith described by Evangelicals. Jessie does not refer to herself as a 'believer'. One might surmise that, if for Jessie, faith is first and foremost about morality, Christianity is the cultural context in which that morality is founded, rather than a narrative which it is imperative to believe.

Conclusion

Of all the narratives in my study, Jessie's is the one which resonates least with my own story. She constructs a tale of work-life in which she positions herself simultaneously as a resistor, a nurturer and a highly skilled, co-operative professional, and from which she seemingly emerges without any of the discomforts and dissonances which both experience and research lead us to expect. Despite her openness as a respondent, and her warmth towards me as my mother's daughter, I sense that we would not have related well to each other as colleagues. I fear that, had I taught alongside her, I would have been disapproved of. Her emphasis on the child's happiness brings to the surface my own guilty recollections of dis-nurture, of failure to perform care. Her accounts of autonomy, fulfilment, and seemingly cost-free resistance are not those to which I can easily relate my own teaching experience. There is no sense in her story of that containment to which teachers through the centuries have borne witness. The absence of 'the grind' in her narrative invokes in me simply a lack of recognition. Her cheerful disengagement with women's issues and her individualistic and moralistic understandings of faith also fail to resonate.

How does she negotiate this narration of herself as a free agent? Perhaps a key to understanding the way in which Jessie chooses to present her story is to consider her narration of major life events. For example, her twins were something of a medical

marvel, being among the smallest premature babies to have survived. Their Early Years were punctuated by operations and extended stays in Great Ormond Street hospital, and yet Jessie offers very little of these times, other than the odd aside – *of course we were back and fore to London with Helen at that time*. Two decades later, Katherine suffered a road accident which reduced her to a return to infancy, and Jessie and her husband have now to help her to relearn to walk, to talk, to eat. And yet Jessie's account of this harrowing and devastating life-event, to the extent she relates it at all, which is minimal, is a positive one. She tends to focus on the practical, talking about the need for a downstairs bathroom, and for Keith to take time out of his studies, rather than to offer a reflection on these circumstances from an emotional perspective.

Perhaps her account of teaching does not allow for the sense of worthlessness clearly experienced by others, because she chooses to construct her position and narrate her story in terms of her own agency. The way she positions herself in relation to different forms of authority, be it in home, school or church, is not suggestive of the hegemonic power so often at work within such systems. Similarly, her response to the various traumas in the lives of her daughters is one of refusal to accept defeat, one of agency and the overcoming of obstacles. Her narrative, perhaps, is itself an act of coping, a way of holding it together which is what is expected of her as a teacher, as a mother, as a wife and as a woman. She has developed a way of looking at herself that reflects the positive, that narrates the coping, the going-on, and consistently minimises what others might regard as extremely negative circumstances.

MARGARET'S STORY

Biographical Overview

Margaret was born around 1947 in a small town in central Scotland. She was the eldest of four daughters. Her father was a factory worker and her mother worked within the home. When Margaret was 14 years old her father died suddenly of heart-disease aged 47 years. In 1965 Margaret enrolled on a Diploma course in Primary Education at Callendar Park College of Education. She stayed at home with her mother and sisters, travelling into Falkirk each day. In 1968 Margaret married Angus, an engineer, and moved to his home-town nearby. That same year Margaret began work as a Primary teacher in one of the two non-denominational Primary Schools in the town, where she remained, with short breaks for the births of her two children, until her retirement in 2007. In 1992 she achieved a Post-Graduate Certificate in Early Education at Moray House College of Education, having made an unsuccessful attempt to gain this qualification 10 years earlier.

Margaret was brought up to attend Sunday School in her local Church of Scotland congregation. Her father, a deeply religious man, conducted family worship in the home daily, but did not approve of church membership, and did not attend church. In young adulthood, Margaret joined the Church of Scotland congregation in which her husband was a deacon. She and her husband remain members in this congregation, but attend only occasionally.

I interviewed Margaret three times. Our first interview was in August 2006 when the interview lasted two hours. Our second interview was in July 2007 for just under two hours. Our final interview took place in April 2008 and lasted just under four hours, although this included a meal and some wider 'chat'.

In School – Life As A Woman Teacher

Margaret's desire to teach was strongly influenced by the memory of her father, and the fact that this had been his chosen profession for her.

I always wanted, from ten, to be a Primary teacher... My dad had four daughters and doted on us, and he always said he would have a teacher and a nurse... He thought it was a good job for a woman because you could work round about your family in they days, and... he died when I was fourteen, so I always had this ambition.

Margaret retained this ambition despite her lack of confidence in her own academic ability:

When the 11-plus came I wasn't confident about ever having the qualifications to teach.

In the event, she did pass her 11-plus and went on to achieve 2 Highers and five O levels which was sufficient for entry into Callendar Park College of Education.

However, she reported a disregard for her Initial Teacher Education.

I got through Callendar Park no problem. I remember thinking to myself 'Well they didn't teach me very much about teaching...'. To me it was run more like a school rather than a college... I just felt like it was a continuation of the high school, you know, you weren't encouraged to express an opinion... and people who did express opinions were kind of shut up...

Margaret expressed a strong and enduring interest in pedagogy.

I was always interested in how children learned, what makes them tick, what makes them conducive to picking up things... Over the years I have never really changed, I have moved with the times, I have had to, I have had to learn to teach differently, I have to use Smart Boards and all the rest of it, but I have never changed my basic interest in what makes children learn.

Having many years experience in the nursery, and holding a Certificate of Early Education, she identifies as something of a specialist in Early Years and laments the lack of knowledge in this area which she perceives in promoted colleagues. She describes the sense of dissonance caused by conflicting understandings of pedagogy in the Early Years.

Sarah, who had no experience of Primary 1... got rid of the house, got rid of the paint. It was a murder year... The children, Primary 1, deteriorated into behaviour tantrums...

Margaret put a very heavy emphasis on the human, caring, nurturing side of teaching, as evidenced in the following anecdote.

I would say we are caring; we do maybe too much. We put up with too much... I had a trip ... it was to Edinburgh, ... and it was a gorgeous day

and this wee girl came in with a big heavy coat and I said 'You can't keep your coat on, come on you are going on the bus'. She wouldn't take her coat off before we went into the bus, and I took her outside... and I said 'What's wrong?', and she opened it and she had on a crotched wee dress that you could see right through, showing her pants, and she didn't want to take the coat off because you could see through and she had no vest... So... wee Elizabeth was the same size as her, so she had on a cotton dress, and I said 'Elizabeth have you got... an underskirt on?', and she said 'Uhuh', and I says 'Would you mind?'. It was a wee white cotton underskirt. I took it off her, and I put the white cotton underskirt on the wee lassie and the open dress on top and we left the coat and she had a great day... I says to wee Elizabeth, I says 'Tell your mum that Mrs Wilson borrowed your underskirt, but I am taking it home and I am going to wash it and iron it and I will bring it back tomorrow'... I could have got into trouble for that... Things like that happened to me in teaching, where I made decisions that are kind of on impulse, and then thought about it and thought 'Oh my God, you know, people up and complaining.

Her perception that rules and regulations meant that this kind of caring was becoming more and more difficult caused her considerable discomfort.

Nowadays I feel... that's why I am glad I am leaving because the parents are no longer allowed in at the end of the day. They have to make an appointment to talk to you. In Primary 1... They know they can't come in and they are upset about that...

At the time of our first interview, Margaret had begun a 'winding down' period, an innovation of the post-McCrone Agreement which allowed teachers near retirement age to work part-time without implications for their pension. Margaret expressed a sense of guilt about working only part-time:

I do more. I can't help it. I feel guilty about no' working the rest of the week... I just want to be there... I help this young... this new PT teacher with the lines, and people say 'You don't even start till 9.20, Margaret. Why are you...?'

As a result of this sense of guilt, Margaret does supply if she is asked to, on her days-off, and doesn't claim pay for doing so.

I have done it, Ann, and I don't ask for my money. I have done it without being paid, that's how stupid I am.

By the time of our second interview, Margaret had retired, but reported a continued involvement in the life of the school on a voluntary basis.

Margaret's account portrays an interesting relationship with policy and policy-makers. The Curriculum for Excellence had just been launched as she neared retirement:

I didn't understand what the Curriculum for Excellence was, because I had had no... it just appeared... this Curriculum for Excellence, it's just landed, and it's just jargon, its words, and I keep saying 'What do you mean Curriculum for Excellence? Is that no' what we have been striving for? I have been striving for 38 years to have an all round and education, with taking the most that a child can be, and making them feel they are valued. And boosting their ability and education is more than reading, writing and arithmetic. But I have always thought that we were doing that. Why did we need to bring in words like 'Curriculum for Excellence'.

She described an incident when a Curriculum Development Officer visited her classroom to help her with the teaching of mental maths:

The first day she was there she sat them down on the rug, which I did anyway, and she proceeded to do exactly the same strategies as I did, even to the very counting and clapping and counting backwards, and they could do it. And she said to me at the end of the half hour, 'These children are brilliant', she says 'They have picked it up'...I says, 'I do that as well', I says 'I have been to the same in-service, obviously, as you'. And she looked at me! She had been seconded!

Margaret reports a strong aversion towards the practice of administering national tests in the Early Years of Primary.

It's about the Head, It's about looking good, How Good is Your School? It's about statistics. It's about numbers.

Her account includes tales of attempted resistance to this practice which culminate in her backing down and testing pupils as instructed by promoted staff. She also expresses a sense of discomfort with current practices in terms of planning.

Young teachers were coming out of College thinking that as long as it's all down in lovely computerised boxes... and I hand in a big forty-seven page Forward Plan for a term's work in Primary 1, and that's when the rot started... I think the young sit on their laptops and do all their planning... they write it up for a week... Now, Primary 1, to me, you can't write a diary for a week. Where does the spontaneity come..? I don't need to put it on a bit of paper, but I have to now. I have to write it down to be accountable, and I have seen young teachers who write every question they are going to ask... My problem always was the accountability, this writing it up. I didn't see the need to put down in a daily diary exactly every area of the curriculum I had covered that day, and what my targets were. My target was to educate the children, and have them reading, writing and doing their sums, and being confident, wee rounded individuals...

Margaret's account also describes problematic relationships with promoted colleagues. She appears to have fixed ideas about the suited-ness of individuals to leadership, and believes that her current Head Teacher is unsuited to the job:

She is not a boss, boss... she is no' the normal boss, if you ken what I mean. She doesn't give a damn, that's the bottom line. Everybody on the staff is saying that. She doesn't care. She is even shutting her door now they were telling me... She shuts her door and it's never open... I only went to Rachel when I had a dire problem, I would never have went near her, because she has got no people skills.

Although she describes the qualities that suit another colleague to the role, this is still constructed by Margaret in negative ways:

She is going to be a boss eventually, I think, because she has got this delegating power. You never catch her chasing her tail... I think Jane is great boss material because she can sit and do nothing and watch everybody round about being busy, and it doesn't bother her. See, I think that's a quality you need when you are a boss. You need to be able to delegate: you need to be able to be happy to see somebody else doing it.

Even her earliest experiences of Head Teachers are ambivalent.

When I was a young teacher, the boss was the boss, and you looked, well you should have been looking up to him, you should have been able to go to them for advice, support. But did it ever really happen? I can't remember anytime I went for advice and support coming away feeling 'Oh that was really constructive, and that helped', because it didn't, Ann. And I feel that people who have come out of a classroom... I feel that something needs to be done. They are either managers, or they are teachers. They can't be both.

She had a particularly problematic relationship with one Head Teacher:

The start of my blood pressure problems and all my health deterioration was Jean, and there was all these under-currents that I really wasn't aware of, and here was me beating myself up because it was me, and my problem. It wasn't Jean, it was my problem. I needed to just do something about this. How could this woman have such an effect on my personality?

She acknowledged that this brought an element of bonding to the staff.

It was a horrible... but it tended to bring us together... I can remember thinking when I was at odds with Jean, that I was the only one that couldn't thole her and then I discovered that it was everybody. We were in the same boat.

Indeed, Margaret describes some quite close friendships with colleagues over the years.

I was really quite friendly with them at the time, used to go out on drinking nights and dinners, and I was invited to Mairi's 21st and I went to her mother's, you know... and Katherine McPherson went on holiday with me and the weans up to Forres, in the caravan, for a week... We really had quite a bond, but there is still a bond yet.

Margaret acknowledges that her own attitude to those in authority is problematic.

I always felt intimidated by adults, still do... I am intimidated by people in authority, and I think that's just part-and-parcel of the way we were brought up to know our place... We had a very happy childhood but we weren't encouraged to speak out for ourselves. We weren't encouraged to be like they are now, full of confidence. I mean I was forty before I kind of started saying things that were my opinion... We were seen and not heard.

Margaret relates this to a lack of a sense of self-worth which has dogged her all her life, in every area of her life.

The only thing I regret is no' having more assertiveness and more confidence in me, because had I been more assertive in certain circumstances I wouldn't have caused myself as much grief, I wouldn't have had the stress, I would have shrugged things off, I would have dealt with it rather than letting it... I am too emotional, too... I mean I was never boss material, ever. I didn't want to be promoted... I am not an adult-person, I am a child-person... I always feel everybody is cleverer than me... Our education system did not encourage you to be confident, assertive, and take the initiative. You were seen and not heard... I mean I back down at the first... I avoid confrontation, always have.

Even in the year leading up to her retirement, she was still experiencing a sense of intimidation by those in authority over her:

She [the Head Teacher] was always in the cupboard. She was in all the time watching me, listening, and I was getting neurotic about it. I thought I was doing something really wrong. I was thinking 'Thank God I am leaving, because I must be doing something dead against all education'.

She reports that she didn't read the written feedback provided by her Head Teacher on her performance, as she found it too upsetting. Although negative relationships with Head Teachers clearly took on huge significance, her overall reflection on her teaching career was positive:

I wouldn't change a bit of my life, do you know what I mean, even although I went through traumas with Jean... I would never have changed a bit of it, and I don't regret being in the one school because it was such a school of width.

Margaret's account includes numerous mentions of 'the grind' of teaching.

I had twenty-five children who couldn't tie laces, and I do the gym... it's a nightmare, twenty-five of them on my own... you are mentally dead, you know, even just keeping... you are chasing your tail in an infant classroom. I have chased my tail for years, just the physical, trying to control...

She relates this particularly to ageing.

I think I have been doing it that long... but I am stale now... you are remembering I am a dinosaur... I am on the way out and... I am stressed out of my mind.

Margaret described the poignancy of her last days at work before her retirement, having taught for almost 40 years in the same school. The school held a special leaving Assembly for her to which parents, many of them former pupils, were invited.

What really touched me was, when I looked at the sea of faces, there was Peter Wilson who I had taught in Primary 6 in 1971... A lot of the individual children brought me flowers, brought me perfume, brought me chocolate, brought me wine. So many in each class were sitting along and they had to stand up and say, because they had all had me, what did they remember about Mrs Wilson.... I cried. I was angry with myself, because, when I went along I had decided, 'I will be glad to get out of this place', you know, and that's no' the case. When I went along and saw the... 'Courier' were there, I even made the 'Courier', and the photographer was there. It was when I saw Peter Wilson who I had taught in the 60s... A few of the parents that I had taught had come back... Then they sang this song that they had composed about me, and I got really emotional. God, it was terrible... They took the pictures first which was good, because I was just in tears, and then I had to stand up and say... and all I could say was 'I am sorry I am crying, and I wasn't wanting to cry, because this is a happy day'. And I thought, 'Oh God, how do I get out of here?' And then... I said 'I am no' going to say anything, I am just so delighted to see all these nice people at the back of the room who I have fond memories of'. I made it very short and sweet, but what came over, Beatrice said, 'It came over that you meant it'. Well, I did... Oh, I was very, very emotional.

Margaret's choice to teach has deeply familial roots, teaching being her father's high aspiration for her, an aspiration almost canonised in Margaret's consciousness by his early death. Her account of her Initial Teacher Education reflects a now-familiar disaffection for teacher-training, one which has obvious implications for the way teachers value particular sets of professional knowledge which they perceive as invalid, and for the way teacher-educators are constructed as both controlling (part of the 'They' of the Establishment) and as distanced from the realities of schooling.

Margaret is extremely invested in her school context, having taught up to three generations of children. This passionate investment is particularly clear in her affecting account of her final day in school. She portrays her investment as deeply emotional, more personal perhaps than professional, almost as a sense of familial belonging. Indeed some of the ways in which she narrates her account of teaching resonate with accounts of mothering in other stories. This is particularly evident in her feeling that she *just wants to be there* rather than to take time off, as is her entitlement during her winding-down period. The guilt that she feels about her absence from school echoes the guilt other respondents narrate about their absence from home.

Margaret's account repeatedly suggests that she views policy-innovation as merely linguistic and without any true substance. She understands the essentials of pedagogy to have remained unchanged despite their many reconstitutions through various sets of jargon. Her perception is that new policies such as *Curriculum for Excellence* are produced by the 'They' and that they 'appear' or 'land', and she has no consciousness of policy development as a process in which she might be actively involved.

However, she does experience very considerable discomfort with changes which conflict with her understanding of her role as a teacher. For example, her enduring self-identity as an Early Years specialist comes into conflict with later 'good practices' in this area with which she disagrees, this dissonance being made more poignant by the attempted implementation of these practices by promoted colleagues, imbued by the system with advanced professional knowledge. Further, rigid technologies of planning displaced values central to Margaret's understanding of pedagogy, for example the need to respond spontaneously to children's interests. She narrates her own resistance to the practice of testing in the Early Years, a resistance which falls short of refusing to implement the tests, resulting in a fractured sense of self in relation to her identities as carer and nurturer of children. Such dissonances were experienced also in the tensions between the caring pastoral role of

the teacher as Margaret perceived and practiced it and recent restrictions on, for example, physical interaction with children and free and open interaction with parents. For Margaret, these changes brought a tension to the whole moral nature of her role as a teacher.

She narrates positive relationships with colleagues, with a heightened sense of camaraderie during the 'reign' of her most hated Head Teacher. Her relationships with promoted colleagues are constructed as particularly problematic. Having worked under several head teachers over the years, all are constructed negatively, although the details of these constructions, and the strength of her antipathy towards the persons involved differ. Yet she openly acknowledges her own part in the negativity of these relationships, rooting this in her perceptions of her own lack of self-worth and failure of self-assertiveness. This results in an almost paranoid sense that those in authority were 'out to get her', fuelled by the increasing gulf between her professional practices and those of the hierarchy, and by the surveillant methods of monitoring in place. This self-diagnosed neurosis exists alongside, and perhaps feeds off, a sense of teaching as gruelling body-work, performed through physical and mental exhaustion and an enduring and deepening sense of inadequacy. Yet in all this, her commitment to being with children, and to the disciplinary technology of love, seems unwavering, to such an extent that she chooses to identify with them, not merely as someone who loves children, but as one who is in one sense a child herself. Unlike some commentators on this phenomenon, she appears not to strive against the constraints which lock teachers of small children out from the adult world, but rather she appears to take refuge in them. When such spaces of refuge are disrupted by recent panoptic measures of accountability, her discomfort is extreme.

At Home – Life As A Wife And Mother

Margaret's life-course followed a traditional pattern in some respects. She remained at home until she married, and then moved to her husband's home-town.

I was getting married that year so I decided I would try and get a job in [name of husband's town] because, in they days, it was still very much a second salary.

She gave up her job when she left to have her first child, but returned to teaching when her children were still in infancy. This came about because she had a series of phone-calls from the Head Teacher, beginning when her daughter was 3 months old, asking her to return. When her daughter was 16 months old, a friend and neighbour happened to be visiting at the time and overheard the conversation and offered to do the child-care. Margaret then returned part-time, working mornings only. She did this for 6 months before falling pregnant a second time. Her account suggests that the timing and number of pregnancies she had was the result of positive decision-making, and such decisions were directly related to her work as a teacher.

I wanted two children quick. I wanted to get back because I was always going to teach... you know, teaching was a job where you got summer holidays. I could have children, take them to school with me, and I could work.

She acknowledged that her early return to teaching was unusual, but again justified this in terms of her commitment to teaching.

In these early days you weren't expected to work once you had children... I treated it at that time like it was a career, I always thought I will no' give this up, I want to teach, I don't want to become the little woman in the house.

Her return full-time was also occasioned by pressure from her Head Teacher:

[He] said 'Margaret you need to come back 'cause you will not get a job, you will no' get a part-time job, there is going to be a glut of teachers. If you don't get back in full-time, you will not get back'.

But her return to teaching did not lessen her sense of responsibility in the home:

I always had to put the family first, because in 1968 when I got married and started at [name of school], Oh, Angus's dinner had to be on the table, you know... that was just the way it was Ann... although I wasn't downtrodden or, I had opinions of my own and nobody, even Angus Wilson would tell me what to do.

Indeed, she appears to play a key role in the home which does not sit easily with stereotypical patterns:

But I am actually quite a controller. I run the money, I run everything. I have been lucky because he is that kind of guy, who doesn't like being in charge of things, plus he had psoriasis, so I took on all responsibilities to

help his psoriasis, and I am still doing it. Now he is getting older, he'll say 'I am needing more pocket money' and things, and I will say, 'No, no, if you need money just say the word'... I mean he gets everything he wants.

Despite her relative autonomy in the home, traditional household tasks are all performed by her, and she seems to accept that as her responsibility even while she was working full time and her husband had retired.

The house just doesn't get done to a high standard. It gets done... I make the dinner, I have always made the dinner. I am married to a male chauvinist pig.

Although she acknowledges that it is her role to serve her husband in the domestic sphere, she does not allow that she is subordinated to men.

I don't know a lot about women's issues, because I have always known my place. I am the boss in this domain [the interview was in the respondent's home]. I am no 'a feminist, if you know what I mean. I don't see there is a problem, because I don't think there is any man... I wouldn't see a man in my road, ken what I mean? That's the way I was brought up, to be independent, cut the grass yourself, change a tyre.

Margaret presents marriage as the norm, and constructs unmarried women as problematic.

My Dad's family, they were all old-maids. It's a terrible thing to say, but none of them married. They were career-girls. They had a chip on their shoulder... And Aunt Ina would say, 'I had lots of boyfriends, I was just a bit fussy'.

Margaret spoke about being more aware of children's needs when she became a mother herself.

I am no 'a morning person... Between half-past-seven and half-past-eight I was trying to tidy up, make beds, put the dishes in the dishwasher, get them moving, and there was always tension. And I realised that I had never credited the children with that. Some children come to school, and they have no ' had a breakfast. That was when I realised that there are different issues, depending on the family, and I had to be more sympathetic to children coming in upset.

But she was anxious to maintain a clear demarcation between the roles of mother and teacher, particularly in the context of her workplace, which was also her own children's school.

I treated Jonathan like any other child... I remember he fell off a dyke as I was passing. Somebody shoved him off one of the walls at the school, and he was howling, and I just walked passed and I went into the staff room and I

said, 'There will be a crying child at the door in a minute', and sure enough they brought Jonathan to the staff room and he was howling... and I says, 'Miss Dixon it is Jonathan', and she says 'Did you no deal with it?', and I says 'No, I am not his teacher, I am his mother'.

Outwardly, Margaret's life-course appears traditionally gendered. Indeed her account of home-life in which she had to make dinner for her husband daily, notwithstanding her own circumstances, seems an extreme enactment of women servicing men. Yet Margaret described a domestic set-up in which, despite this compliance with traditional expectations, she constructed herself as both home-maker and head-of-the-family. In her construction she is in charge of the domestic sphere, and her husband is cast almost as a dependent. She seems at peace with an understanding of gender relations in which women have a particular domestic role, which gives them certain additional responsibilities but does not subordinate them to men. She sees such a role as the norm for women and constructs unmarried women as 'other'. Despite (or perhaps because of) her reported independence of men, Margaret is careful to distance herself from feminism, declaring there to be no problem.

Margaret did not allow domestic responsibilities to constrain her early career choices. Although Margaret's return to teaching was brought about as much by the persistence of the Head Teacher as by her own career aspirations, she does narrate a consciousness of the tensions between traditional perceptions of the woman's role in the home and her desire to maintain her career. Yet she actively challenged such traditional expectations in order to teach, even when her children were very young. Further, she does not refer to her children as 'coming along', but rather to a positive decision to have two children early in her married life in order to cause as little disruption as possible to her working life. Despite this, she still characterises teaching as well suited to home-making and mothering and draws in her account on the commonalities of the two roles, while simultaneously establishing the dualities of the roles. It appears that constant identity-negotiation is required to find ways of piecing together the complex combinations of woman, wife, mother and teacher in this account.

In Church – Life As A Woman Of Faith

Margaret described the way in which she maintained a traditionally Christian input in the classroom despite opposition from one Head Teacher. She saw it as her role to educate children in the basics of Christian knowledge and practice, including the learning and recitation of the 'Lords Prayer'. She justified this practice by her perception that Scotland is a Christian country:

I haven't any other children, like I have only got Scottish children. When I have had Chinese I didn't do a prayer... Jean told me I hadn't to do it years ago, and I took that up with the minister, and he said 'Margaret you are Christian country. Have you got any ethnic children or any Hindus or anything?' I says 'No'.

Her own religious upbringing is intriguing. Her mother belonged as a child to the Brethren, but, according to Margaret, had to leave due to being unable to undergo baptism by total emersion as she had perforated ear-drums! Her father, although neither a church member nor adherent, read aloud every night to his wife and children from the Bible:

My dad didn't go to church, but he read every night from the family Bible... He used to say, 'I work beside people who are six-day-a-week heathens and one-day-a-week Christians because they are in the church on a Sunday', and his philosophy was to live to the Christian value every day, and you don't need to go and sit in a church to be a good person... We were brought up in a very religious way without going to church, but we went to Sunday school. We got the Sunday school attendance prizes every year.

She and her siblings were not baptised into the Church of Scotland, as her parents were not members. Although her mother had wanted to join the church in order to have her children christened, her father had refused:

My dad says, 'No. When they are old enough they can make up their own mind. We have brought them up in the Church of Scotland ways'.

When her father died, Margaret cut her connection with the Church of Scotland.

When my dad died, at 14, that left big scars, and I didn't go back to the Bible Class. This God had taken the best thing away from me.

But she returned some years later:

And it took me about four or five years of real conflict between... it was just grief, you know, I had to go through the processes and I came out at the end of it, and I went back in.

Despite her commitment to the church, due to her non-membership she could marry in the church in which she grew up only on the strength of her husband's connection to the neighbouring parish church.

Then I was getting married and of course I wanted married in the Church of Scotland in [name of home town] so I went trotting up to see Mr Robertson... and he said to me, 'Are you a member of the church?', I said 'No, I haven't joined, I haven't been christened, I need to get christened to join the church'... 'And why should I marry you if you are not a member of my church?' I says, 'I have been in your church fae I was five'. 'I know, but you are not a member', and then he says, 'Who are you marrying?' I says 'Angus Wilson from [name of husband's town]'. 'Is he a member?'... I says 'Yeah, his father is an elder in [name of parish] and he is a deacon'... 'Oh that's OK then. I will marry you, right'.

She eventually came into membership on the insistence of her mother-in-law and underwent a private christening in order to comply with ecclesiastical law.

When I moved to [name of husband's town], Angus's mother said to me, 'Well', Angus was on duty as a deacon so many Sundays, so she says 'You really need to join the church Margaret.' So I did... Mr McMartin christened me in the vestry. It wasn't a big church thing.

Although Margaret is still a member of her local Church of Scotland congregation, she does not regularly attend church. She seems to have adopted her father's philosophy that church attendance is not necessary for Christian living:

I don't attend, and a lot of people think I am a heathen... in fact I am probably more religious in lots of ways than a lot of people who go to the church. I research, I read, I watch programmes. I am always striving.

She relates this description of her religious life directly to her attitude to death. Despite her tentative belief in God, she has no expectation of an after-life.

I came to grips with death when I was young, and I have no fears of death and it doesn't worry me, it's just a long sleep... Well, there is nothing you can do about it anyway, but it doesn't hold any fears for me because I think you are safe. You are out of the strife.

Her early experience of bereavement, when her father died, had recently been compounded by the loss of her mother and of her sister, who died of cancer a few months before our first interview. She said of her mother, who had suffered from dementia

When she died I was relieved, it was like she is safe.

Her sister's long years of suffering from cancer made a deep impression on Margaret:

Jessie suffered for eight years with breast cancer and really suffered badly, and last summer... she died... she lasted till September but I was going down every second night to [name of sister's town] to visit and to support Jessie and her husband, and I was driving down that road, Ann, and I would be saying 'Please God take Jessie soon. She cannot go through much more of this... Please, if there's a God at all, she can't put up with this...'

She contrasts her own understanding of Christianity to that of her brother-in-law, her sister's widower. She described him as,

'Into the Lord' and all the rest of it. He is into religion in a big way. He is a born -again Christian and he is an elder. He is very spiritual. He has a great belief.

Margaret is invested in Christianity in terms of its being a cultural norm for Scotland, and this is evidenced through her maintenance and defence of religious practices in school. The religious, yet relatively church-free, nature of her upbringing, appears to have evolved into an understanding of Christianity as primarily a set of values for living, and a sense of striving for what is right. Her sense that Christianity has a proper place in schooling is consistent, then, with notions of Protestantism as a form of moral guardianship. Her relationship with the Kirk as an institution seems to have been somewhat problematic from childhood, her desire for true belonging falling foul of ecclesiastical regulations at various points in her life-course. While she now belongs in the technical sense, the link is tenuous and she does not appear to invest in the life of the religious community to any great extent.

In terms of the specificity of her faith, Margaret engages in the same boundary work as do the Evangelical women in the study by establishing a demarcation between different expressions of Christianity. Although she does believe in God, a belief that was shaken but not abandoned at the time of her father's early death, and questioned again during her sister's devastating illness, she constructs her brother-in-law's beliefs – *born again... into the Lord and all the rest of it* - as contrasting with her own. There is also an absence in her account of expressions of the need to share faith with others.

She draws a strong perceptual connection between faith and death, yet this is not understood in terms of death as a portal to the ultimate realisation of the object of faith. Rather she insists that she has no belief in an after-life as such, although she does portray death as *a long sleep* and as a state of peace and of safety, implying, perhaps, a sense of continuing rather than of ending.

Conclusion

Margaret presents as simultaneously invested in and devoted to her career, and as desperately lacking assurance of her professional worth. Yet her sense of self in the home seems much more assured and here she presents as both invested and fulfilled. Of all the participants, she is perhaps the least invested in faith, yet she appears to find in her understanding of the divine a comfortable and comforting world view.

MY STORY

I was a teacher. I never wanted to be, and now that I've stopped, I never will be again, but for several years it took my heart. I entered a place of darkness, a long tunnel of days: retreat from the world. I wanted to explain, to tell what it is I know. Teaching young children must always be, in some way or other, a retreat from general social life and from fully adult relationships, a way of becoming Lucy Snowe's dormouse, rolled up in the prisonhouse, the schoolroom "Prisonhouses" (STEEDMAN, 1985:8)

It seems appropriate for this thesis to include, not only the narratives of the six research participants, but also my own story, my own lived experiences within the social worlds of religion and education in Scotland. Such an inclusion of authorial identities seems fitting for several reasons. First, my original interest in the core themes of the study emerges directly from my own observations of, and participation in, these social worlds. The study, consequently, is motivated and influenced by, and contingent on, my own partial and particular understandings of these worlds. Secondly, the narratives of the participants are shaped, inevitably, by my own, both through the subjectivity I brought to the interviews, and through the reciprocal sharing of stories and experiences during the interviews. Finally, the methodology employed is one which consciously utilises the lived experience of the researcher as a tool in the interpretation of the lives of others. There is a sense in which the entire thesis, and not just this chapter-section, is autobiographical, paying attention as it does to social locations and subject positions which are, to varying extents, my own. Indeed, Stanley argues that feminist autobiography ought to be *anti-spotlight* (STANLEY, 1992:253), ought to portray the subject through exploration of the many textures of the broader social context, rather than construct a subject as single and unique, as an individual self.

I offer my own narrative, then, as a text situated within the same methodological framework as those of my participants. It is not my life story, neither do I attempt to portray any 'real self'. It is not even a full or definitive account of my participation in the worlds of school and church. Rather, it is a partial, selective and subjective

reconstruction of aspects of my lived experience which have particular resonance with this study, which reveal the processes of its production, and which can be used to make sense of the socio-political positioning of women within the contexts under investigation.

Biographical Overview

I was born in 1966 in Aberdeen on the East coast of Scotland, the fourth of five children born to my parents. My mother was a Primary school teacher, although most of her career was spent in special education. My father was a research scientist working at a local, government-funded research institute for soil science. We were brought up to attend the Free Church of Scotland congregation in Aberdeen, where my father was (and is) an elder and Session Clark. I came into membership in this congregation at the age of 17.

In 1984, I moved to Edinburgh where I matriculated on the B.Ed Primary course at the Moray House College of Education and attended one of the Edinburgh congregations of the Free Church of Scotland. After graduating, I taught as an unpromoted teacher for a total of 16 years in two schools in small West-Lothian towns, although, for the latter 5 years I taught only part-time. The bulk of my teaching experience was with children in the early years of Primary. In 1998 I completed a part-time Master's degree in Education at Moray House, by then part of the University of Edinburgh, and in 2000 took up a part-time research secondment at the university, enrolling part-time in a PhD program when that secondment ended in 2002. In 2005, I took up a full-time position as a Lecturer in Primary Education at the same institution, continuing to work towards a PhD through part-time study.

During my student years much of my social life revolved around the Free Church and its associated student groups. When I graduated in 1988, I took up part-time casual work in the Free Church offices before beginning my first teaching job the following spring. During the intervening two decades, I have become gradually less

and less involved in the Free Church, both structurally and socially. However, I retain my membership with the denomination and attend worship services regularly.

At School – Life as a Woman Teacher

The staffroom is full of women eating cottage cheese or grapefruit. Each of them knows about diet and eating and sexuality. They are willing and happy to talk about these, caught inside what they are: the unique combination of worker and woman, dependent and independent, free and trapped (WALKERDINE, 1990:28).

From April 1989 until June, 2005, I was a Primary teacher. On the day I left my last classroom, and my latest colleagues, I wept. I was overwhelmed with a sense of release, of freedom. I was moving outwith the tyranny of school hierarchies, beyond their jurisdiction. Once they had awed me, latterly irritated and outraged. Once I had complied fully, latterly challenged, even thwarted where I could, when I dared. To the end they frightened me – their ‘power over’ seemingly absolute, their integrity dubious and sporadic.

But, on leaving teaching, my sense of loss was as acute as my sense of release. The company of endlessly-dieting, working-class, married women in grimy staffrooms had not been my natural comfort zone. Middle-class, single, and non-dieting, I had been the stranger, the outsider. Yet, in these communities, I had found place, acceptance, inclusion, and formed deep friendships, all the sweeter for the lack of commonality.

A sense of failure also attended this departure. Long marginalised and discouraged by hegemonic discourses of the ‘good teacher’, the chance to be her finally evaded me. My draughty small-town classroom would never now be transformed into the rain forest, dripping with tissue tendrils and the unconscious irony of ‘save our planet’ banners. My car would never now signal exemplary teacher dedication by driving up first on cold crisp mornings nor remaining till last in the emptying twilight of the school car park. I would not now be that angelic soft-spoken being who never shouted, who always smiled, whose little ones were quiet but never too quiet, busy

but never burdened. She had finally eluded me; her success, her femininity, beyond my reach.

They (Primary teachers) have the charm of great actresses. They move with wonderful grace. Their voices are low, penetrating, musical... Their dress is beautiful and simple, and nothing is so remarkable as their power – except their gentleness (McMillan (1908) in STEEDMAN, 1992:190).

And then there was the guilt. All the positive teacher-pupil interactions of near 2 decades of “good-enough” (Winnicott (1964) in STEEDMAN, 1992:186) teaching seem marred, invalidated by memories of dis-nurture. I never struck a child but I know I hurt some; at times failed to reward, to encourage, to understand, ultimately to forgive. Too often the tender words which turn away wrath occurred later in the sleepless recollection of encounters which had seemed just in the chalky heat of the day, but appeared heartless in the watches of the night. Strange how that watchfulness which caring for little children demands of us, spills into the spaces which should be our own, into our weekends, our holidays, even our nights; and remains a part of us long after the watching is done.

But what of the journey from aspiring teacher to departure from the school classroom? My memories of undergraduate teacher education are sketchy. I had no real sense of vocation, but Primary teaching was a respectable job, one particularly suited to a girl as my mother and aunt could testify, that suitedness seemingly as unproblematic for them as it was, at the time, for myself. And my projected (and actual) school attainment was in that bracket which rendered the traditional University education enjoyed by my siblings just beyond reach, but sufficed for a degree route into Primary teaching.

The year I entered College of Education was the first of compulsory graduate education for Primary teachers in Scotland and the College-based 4-year B.Ed was state-of-the-art. Yet, of the course content, I remember little. Subjects were divided into the areas of the Primary school curriculum, and augmented by the somewhat imprecisely named TPT, the theory and practice of teaching. I don’t recall finding any of it challenging nor even of interest. I was in my final year before I saw the inside of the library and I experienced no intellectual awakening during those

undergraduate years. What I do recall, on reflection, is a lingering sense of inferiority in comparison to students at the university and a sense of grievance on having missed out on a 'real' student experience which I perceived to be on offer there.

I remember with more clarity, however, the experience of school placements, the 'practical' element in our initial teacher education. Some, particularly in early years settings, were warm and happy contexts in which I felt the stirrings of 'calling', and in which I warmed to the presence of children and sought to model myself around perceived notions of 'the good teacher'. Others were intensely negative experiences, in which my unintentional failures to conform and to perform elicited harsh criticism from school staff, causing me to withdraw, and leading, in turn, to the perceived sin of lack-of-enthusiasm. Although I would not then have articulated it as I do now, I learned early in my teaching experience that school cultures require something very costly of us as women teachers. They require unquestioning conformity, the performance of particular kinds of femininity (those I had somehow failed to learn), and our complicity in the surveillance of our practices and even of our bodies.

I recall one placement experience as particularly problematic. In our second year we were allocated 10 single days – one day per week – in a nursery setting. Advised on my arrival that my being there created an unfortunate imbalance in their child-adult ratio, I was at once acutely aware of my embodied self within that setting. Although not tall, and, then, quite slim, I was painfully conscious of my adult size which I perceived as somehow grotesque against the miniature context of pre-school children and Montessorian furniture. I endeavoured to minimise my bodily presence by observing from corners, by moving little, talking little. The weekly nature of the placement coupled with the age of the children facilitated this remote, disengaged pedagogical relationship. I recall only one given task in that setting, that, bizarrely, to make a broomstick from a broom handle and some twigs and string. I was left alone in a walk-in cupboard to do so. I failed miserably. I cannot recall any encouragement from school staff to be more or differently involved with the children, yet I was deemed to have failed that placement due to my remoteness and

disengagement. The broomstick task and its setting, seem, on reflection, to symbolise early performances of compliance, early experiences of isolation, and to highlight issues of school space and enforced creativity. But somehow that broomstick, universally emblematic of the freakish and distorted femininity of witchcraft, also conjures for me still that particular experience of failure, and a wonder at the seeming absence of empathy in the staff concerned.

While the practical requirements of the B.Ed caused me a little angst at times, the academic component was plain, if dull, sailing and I duly graduated and moved, as anticipated, towards a career in Primary teaching. I began that career with an overwhelming sense of freedom lost. The containment of classroom life daunted me from the very beginning. I remember, on the offer of my first job, a sense of ending, of foreboding. I negotiated with the head-teacher the latest possible start-date, little knowing how little such negotiation my teaching career would involve.

My first job was in an area of considerable socio-economic disadvantage in a small ex-mining community. The fabric of the school, a post WW2 structure, was – quite literally – crumbling. My colleagues, many of whom had worked in the same setting over long years were tired, disillusioned and resigned, yet not without deep commitment to, and genuine care for, their pupils. A poignant occurrence for me during my tenure at this school was the harrowing event in Dunblane Primary in March 1996. I recall hearing the news that day at school and reflecting on the parallels – I too had an infant class of 30 children in a small Scottish town. I too had taken my class to the gym hall that morning. Yet I was not, and never could have been Gwen Mayor, soft and smiling, forever immortalised by her final acts of nurture and of self-sacrifice.

I didn't know this history when I entered that enclosed space, the Primary classroom. I didn't know about a set of pedagogic expectations that covertly and mildly – and never using this vocabulary – hoped that I might become a mother (STEEDMAN, 1985:17).

My first class had been recently vacated by a promoted member of staff, absent due to nervous indisposition, brought on, so the narrative went, by the vexatious behaviour of the children. I found myself in a small and shabby classroom, day-time

home to 32 unmanageable eight-year-olds. I don't know yet how I lived through that first term. As I recall, I shouted a lot at school and slept a lot at home. Colleagues were kind, but no structured support was offered nor expected. A teacher must shut her classroom door, isolate herself bodily with the children, and do the best she can. By the end of that term I was deemed a success, not because of any pedagogical merit in my teaching strategies, but merely because I had 'coped' with the class responsible for the early end to another's career. My temporary contract was made permanent. *Baptism by fire* commented a senior colleague as I left on the final day of term.

Yet, despite this successful beginning, I never considered myself a good teacher, but was rather plagued by a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt, a sense that I had no real understanding of the science or mechanics of teaching and learning and a fear that my inadequacies might at any time be exposed. Thrown, without any support structure, into a large class of unruly children, I had fallen, despite previous ideals, into an authoritarian role. I expected unquestioning conformity from children. At the same time I observed that my colleagues demonstrated the same kind of conformity in their relationships with school management, and that school management seemed to expect nothing less, nothing more. I too adopted this model and kept my head down. Indeed, in my early years of teaching I don't remember reflecting very much on anything other than on how not to incur the displeasure of school management. As I became more relaxed and confident as a teacher, however, I became more committed to autonomy – both my own and that of my pupils. I adopted the use of the 'integrated day' through which children were less teacher-directed and took on more responsibility for their own learning and task completion. Yet this change in outlook coincided with policy shifts toward more prescriptive, less child centred pedagogies in the wake of 5-14 and its associated assessment procedures. I came under pressure to adopt a system of strict timetabling, whole-class teaching, and blanket testing which was irreconcilable with my favoured classroom practices. I experienced considerable dissonances in this area and observed that my colleagues felt similarly. Yet, when I suggested to colleagues that we might collectively resist the new pressures, calling on union support, they showed

no inclination to offer any resistance, despite their own discomfort with the innovations. This led to a sense of frustration on my part and a desire to explore the structures which produced these power relations and to better understand the women who maintained and reproduced them. That desire led, in turn, to this thesis.

I don't remember regarding the gendered nature of Primary teaching as problematic in my early years of practice. But in later years came the dawning of certain realisations; an awareness that, unlike the workplace cultures which my friends in other professions described, there appeared to be no consciousness of issues of gender parity, and, therefore, a complete absence of activism. At the same time, I became aware of a certain bonding between unpromoted teachers, a sisterhood in adversity, created in part by the uncomfortable conditions described in the previous paragraph. But this was limited to mutual comfort in unhappiness rather than mobilisation towards resistance, and I wondered why this was so, why collective resistance did not evolve from conditions which seemed to me ideally suited to nurture such a response.

Having taught for a number of years, a sense of dissatisfaction and underachievement, born of my undergraduate experience as much as my experience of teaching, led me to seek transitional space in education for the purpose, perhaps, of self-actualisation if not quite self-reinvention. I returned to Moray House, by this time an associate institute of Herriot Watt University, to study part-time for a post-graduate degree in Education. As I recall, a lot of that too was rather pedestrian, but elements of it – notably a module on professionalism – I found to be stimulating. It allowed for reflection on the control of teachers and opened up possibilities for re-imagining the teacher's role. Two years after completion of this degree, the opportunity arose for a part-time secondment to the University of Edinburgh (which, meantime, had absorbed Moray House) as a 'Teacher Researcher'. It was during this tenure that I began to reflect on teacher culture in terms of the processes of gender and power. I also noted particularities in relationships between teachers and the academy. On the part of teachers, there was a seeming lack of respect for their own 'training', a distance from research endeavours, yet a lingering deference to Initial

Teacher Education staff. On the part of ITE staff, perhaps inevitably, a culture of criticism of teachers, yet also, it seemed to me, a distance from the realities of classroom life.

My forays into academic life had a two-fold effect on my continuing teaching experience. For the first time in over a decade of professional life, I began to enjoy Primary teaching. Perhaps this was because I was now teaching for only half the week, and thus less vulnerable to the eroding effects of classroom life. But it was more than this. The opportunity to reflect on the working lives of teachers brought with it the possibility of becoming reconciled to my own lived experiences as a teacher and my many discomforts with the role. Especially, perhaps, I began to conceptualise my own sense of inadequacy as a product of the power relations within schooling, rather than of any personal deficit on my part. I had been *caught, trapped... in an idealist dream, an impossible fiction* (WALKERDINE, 1992:16). And I began to understand the extent to which such a sense of inadequacy was shared, almost universally, by unpromoted women Primary teachers. Secondly, thus liberated from the constant fear of exposure, I taught with new confidence, and engaged with new boldness with promoted colleagues and school management. Within the school, I challenged management strategies which I felt disrespected myself and my colleagues, memorably, a new initiative to keep all new resources – paper, paint, jotters – under lock and key to be accessed only through promoted staff. Characterising such strategies as acts of mistrust and obstruction led to a rethink on the part of school leaders who wished to be understood as collegiate.

But despite moments of fulfilment and usefulness, I did not, overall, enjoy being a teacher. I knew early on in my student years that I did not want to teach. Yet, until a very viable alternative offered itself in the form of employment in Higher Education, I did not seriously consider leaving the classroom. In Weber's sense, all work, for the Protestant psyche, is a moral activity. In my sense-making processes, the labours of teaching were a burden I had to bear. That I did not enjoy it did not justify relinquishing it, even though, having no dependents, I was, in a sense, free to live as I chose.

Life At Home

Broadly, mine was a happy childhood. We lived in a large house in the suburbs of Aberdeen, the house and those immediately surrounding constructed circa 1960. In my earliest memories, our garden backed onto a farm, from where we bought fresh eggs, and whence, one memorable Sunday morning, a field of cows violated the back fence and made free with my father's flowers and vegetables. My maternal grandparents lived in a similar but smaller house three doors up, and theirs was a second home to us as children. My paternal grandparents lived in Inverness, and we had various connections in the North West Highlands and the in the Outer Hebrides. As children, we visited such communities regularly. My father had an interest in Scottish history and in the place of Gaelic in Highland religion and thus we grew up with a sense of cultural rootedness. Yet we were brought up in a city suburb, and lived, as houses sprung up around us, in an increasingly suburban manner. This led to a dissonance, a sense of discontinuity in my emerging Scottish identity, between what I felt it was to be Scottish, (or more precisely, perhaps, Highland or Celtic, Highlanders having the right ingredients of a 'people' – history, culture, community and language (MACDONALD, 1997)) and the actuality of our location in suburban Aberdeen. I have never considered myself as Aberdonian, but rather, in a somewhat vague and undeserving sense, as Highland. As a young adult I felt envious of the sense of place and identity seemingly enjoyed by friends who could claim the remote, the rural and the spartan as 'home', those who could claim the *status of peripherality* (MACDONALD, 2001:152). A middle-class suburban childhood is so lacking in the remarkable.

Our parents were secure financially, my father having completed a doctorate and secured employment in agricultural research at a time when national Government still saw fit to fund such, and remunerate it amply. Yet we were brought up in ways rather more frugal than our peers, *with the appearance of evident but restrained wealth* (MACDONALD, 1997:184). We often wore handed-down clothes, we owned one pair of shoes at a time, and we holidayed in the Scottish Highlands. We

had no television, its absence due as much to moral as to financial considerations. Living in a fairly affluent community, this frugality made us 'other' at times. Yet it instilled a respect for thrift. We are all, my siblings and I, 'good with money'. I cannot imagine being in debt, although I don't deny myself the little things, and I have a lot of shoes.

My parents always maintained a degree of financial independence, having separate bank accounts, although, I assume that until my mother returned to teaching, the main deposits to her account must have come from my father. But, to a child, she had the appearance of financial independence and such independence seemed to me to be at the heart of human dignity. I remember a sense of awe and shock when I witnessed a supermarket conversation between a man and a woman, strangers to me. I must have been around 12 years old. The woman had picked a small refill bottle of 'Mum', a woman's antiperspirant product popular in the 70s. The product cost 22 pence. The woman, in her thirties and articulate, was making an impassioned case in favour of its purchase to her husband. She told him how long the previous one had lasted. She pointed out the saving in purchasing a refill, over the full product. She was pleading with him. The scene horrified me, and I vowed never to find myself so powerless.

Education was always of the utmost importance. My earliest memory of my parents' concern for my education is a poignant one. My mother had a book of IQ tests and sat me down at the kitchen table, probably just before I started school, to assess my intellect. I remember some bafflement on my part and a sense of an inability to perform as required. The result was a score much poorer than those of my older siblings. My parents' response to this discovery was, perhaps, to accept as a given that my intellect was limited, relative to my siblings. This did not diminish the importance of my schooling – 'doing your best' at school was always a high priority. But it did seem to diminish their expectations for my achievement, and, consequently, my own expectations and exertions were diminished also. Subconsciously, I learned that I could achieve what was expected with a minimal amount of effort, and my performance at Primary school bore out the predictions of

the IQ test. When, in high school, my grades proved higher than expected, I was praised for diligence and dedication. On my graduation with a B.Ed, with neither honour nor distinction, my mother expressed her pride in my efforts, in all my hard work. I was well into adulthood before I consciously realised that my limited intellect was a reality of my own construction.

Our upbringing was not, given the cultural and religious position of my parents, overtly gendered. Household tasks were divided along gendered lines, with my brothers busy in the garden and myself and my sister in the house, but in most respects we were treated with equality. The roles which my parents modelled, however, belied this. My mother undertook all domestic tasks, in addition to her full-time teaching job, and latterly the care of her elderly parents, and she also took primary responsibility for our parenting, at least in the early years. My father was a keen gardener, and he was also very involved in church governance and in para-church activities, to which he would repair having consumed the meal which my mother had hastily prepared for his return from work. Latterly, he took up an interest in Scottish ecclesiastical history, and, following enforced early-retirement in the Thatcher years, authored two books in this area. In all this he performed his role as provider, protector and moral guardian with integrity and with kindness. Yet my mother's life was one of domestic toil: a life in which her own interests were sidelined and her own gifts under-developed, in order to service a husband and five children. I only once recall hearing her play her violin, an activity in which she was expert before she married. Performing such a role seemed axiomatic for her and I have never known her to voice resentment, or even regret for the other forms of fulfilment she missed, the other ways of being she might have enjoyed. But I cannot reflect on her many sacrifices of self without anger and tears.

Only in terms of moral protection did I experience a little more surveillance than did my brothers. When I was around thirteen, my mother gave me a poster for my bedroom wall. It had a picture of a kitten, white and soft, and bore the words *Keep yourself pure*. I know the giving was motivated by love and concern, but my teenage brothers never received such a gift, though they too were loved. Permission for my

vaccination against Rubella at puberty was withheld, since, for my parents, this seemed symbolic of under-aged or unmarried sex, seemingly regarded by them not merely as undesirable but as unthinkable, given the risk implied by their decision. I wonder at this still.

I am not married, nor do I have children of my own, but the explanations for these realities I will not narrate here, as they are stories which are not mine alone to tell. To be a single, childless woman, even in the 21st Century is, in a sense, to be waiting, to be seen to be lacking, to be incomplete. And despite statistics which appear to normalise single non-parenthood, at least for the middle classes, it still feels like 'other'. My own identity as a Primary teacher suffered increasing sense of discomfiture with the conceptual links between mothering and Primary schooling. Identity as a non-mother brought with it a sense of unfitness, almost of unworthiness. To my colleagues, even those to whom I was close, I imagined myself to be *a woman who is not a mother, a woman who does not care: a woman who has refused to mother* (STEEDMAN, 1985:9). On taking up PhD study, when I began to job-share with a colleague who was returning part-time having had a baby, I was keenly aware of the illegitimacy, the unfemininity, of my position in comparison to hers. That sense of lack was not, and is not, confined to life in school. Yet I know, too, that not to mother is to enjoy freedom and possibilities entirely denied to those who do.

In Church – Life as a Woman of Faith

Early memories of involvement in the Free Church of Scotland are dim, yet it was always a central part of our family lives. From as early as I can remember, even in pre-school years, we attended twice on a Sunday. When we were very young, sleeping through the sermon was permissible, although not always possible, given the hardness of the pews and the tendency of the incumbent minister to sudden shouting. As we matured, sleeping in church was characterised as slothful and disrespectful, and so we passed the time in wakeful silence, although, as I recall, with minimal engagement in the content. Yet the social environment of church was not

the austere, unyielding regime of George Mackay Brown's productions. Church was a place of solemnity, but also of dignified cordiality, a place of belonging.

In the 1970s, the Free Church of Scotland had in place a structured program of education for children. From the age of five we were assessed on our scriptural and theological knowledge orally, then, by the age of eight, by written examination in scripture and catechism. This involved learning 'by heart' Bible passages, sections from the Scottish metrical Psalms, and responses from the Shorter Catechism. But it also involved understanding these and being able to answer questions on their meaning (from within a Reformed Protestant interpretation). While, as children, we found this educational approach rather irksome, and even a little stressful at exam times (I was physically sick on the examiner's lap at my very first oral exam!), I do not recall finding it oppressive or limiting. Further, I remember both the content and the process of this learning clearly, while I have very little recollection of learning at school over the Primary years. Being thus instructed both in Sunday school and at home, at a time when Primary education was operating upon a very different set of pedagogies and involved no formal assessment at all, I made an early link between cognitively challenging learning and Christian religion.

An element of Presbyterian culture which was rather irksome to us as children, however, was Sabbath observance. Our Sunday mornings and evenings were fully occupied, but Sunday afternoons were long and dull. We were not allowed to meet with our friends or to play outside. We could not play with our toys. We could read only Christian material. Going for a walk was permissible but riding our bikes was not. This, more than any other element of my Evangelical Presbyterian upbringing made me feel 'other'. Often I missed birthday parties or other events that my peers enjoyed because they fell on a Sunday. I was the only child in my class who did not attend school camp in Primary seven as it ran over the weekend. During my secondary schooling, there was an annual musical show which I longed to participate in. But the rehearsals were on Sundays. Once, bizarrely, when Christmas fell on a Sunday, we celebrated it on Monday. Living far from rural Highland Presbyterian communities in which such practices were (and are) common-place, I met with

bafflement when I tried to explain to peers or to teachers why it was that my Sundays were thus restricted. Tellingly, perhaps, it is an element of my religious and cultural upbringing which, as an adult, I have all but abandoned. Yet I still feel a sense of dislocation if I catch myself in an activity that would have been proscribed in my Sabbatarian past, and I still sense that one day of rest in seven may be a prudent practice.

As I recall, there was little distinction made between girls' and boys' participation in church culture, other than in dress for worship. We all dressed-up for church, but for girls such dressing-up involved the wearing of skirts and dresses (never trousers) and hats. As the younger of two daughters, many of my clothes were handed down, and I recall in particular a white straw hat that was rather too large and which, when I fell asleep in the pew, fell onto the lap of the man behind. I remember the stinging ignominy of having it replaced by him at the end of the service. The practice of head-covering, however, didn't extend to my teenage years. When I was around the age of 11, my mother made me a cape of purple checked Harris tweed (purchased on a family holiday in the Isle of Lewis). The Sunday following its completion, I was keen to wear it to church but no hat could be found to match it. My mother conceded that I might attend church unhatted on this occasion, and, as I recall it, I never wore a hat to church again. This was not an isolated act of radicalism, but occurred alongside a softening of attitudes towards head-covering, particularly in city congregations. Within months my older sister was attending hatless, and within years my mother was too.

Free Churches in Scottish cities attracted the majority of their membership from people whose cultural roots were in the Highlands and islands. Consequently, the social community of which I was a part was something of a Highland ghetto. It was common-place to be surrounded by Gaelic speakers and a frequent source of discomfort to be excluded from conversations as I did not 'have' Gaelic. It is argued that, because the distinctives of Calvinist religion are played out in the city churches by people of Highland descent, these forms of religious expression become conceptualised as Highland (MACDONALD, 1997). Thus my Scottish Highland

and my religious identities were infused and church membership took on additional meanings: it represented also the rustic and the periphery, a space and time outside modernity (MACDONALD, 2000), the coveted but elusive Highland Identity.

During my student and young adult years, I practised both conformity and resistance within this religious culture. In terms of the theological position of the church, I was a convert. However, in other respects, I actively challenged the *status quo*. I had long rejected head-covering, but as a student I began to attend church in jeans. At the time, I was the only woman to do so, indeed the only unskirted woman in the Edinburgh city congregation which I attended. I remember peers being shocked and reproachful. But I was sufficiently theologically literate to be able to defend my choice, although, as I recall, I was never called on to do so by those in authority in the church. Within months other young adults were dressing similarly, and within years, such a mode of dress for women had become unremarkable in city contexts. Again, I don't claim pioneering status in this matter. Rather, my resistance coincided with, and was bolstered by, changing attitudes towards modes of dress for worship. On reflection, I see in myself at that age something of the Evangelical's concern to disentangle religion and culture. I regarded conventional modes of dress for worship as cultural and therefore dispensable, while simultaneously adhering firmly to very conservative theologies.

I cannot pinpoint an exact location in my life course at which this began to change, nor when the position of women within the Free Church of Scotland began to trouble me. But by the age of 30 I found participation in this religious community uncomfortable. Young men who had been my contemporaries and companions as a student, were now, ostensibly, in positions of spiritual authority over me and (why had I failed to notice this before?) over women much older and much wiser than we were. Subconsciously, I had regarded such power as fitting when performed by men of my father's generation. But now I began to understand it in different ways. I knew these men, and could not bring myself to regard them as any wiser, nor any more godly, than I was myself. I began to conceptualise their position as reflecting male privilege produced through very human processes rather than signalling

divinely sanctioned authority. But this did not sit easily with my understandings of biblical teachings on male leadership. And a traditional view on male leadership was part of a set of biblical 'truths' in the paradigm in which I was thinking. It seemed to be all or nothing.

Around this time, I picked up a book entitled *What's Right with Feminism* (STORKEY, 1985), which explored the place of women within British Evangelicalism and the churches' attitudes to the women's movement. It was written by a female scholar who both rejected traditional teaching on male leadership, and affirmed a broadly Evangelical view of biblical text as divinely authored. It was, she argued, a question of interpretation. I was entranced by this book. I found in its pages such resonances with my experiences as a woman within Evangelicalism, and such remedies for my recent discomfort and confusion. I was struck by her emphasis on God as wholly outwith, beyond and above gender. I understood for the first time that, while the tradition of my upbringing overtly taught me that God was a spirit, neither male nor female, it rhetorically impressed upon me that God-ness and male-ness were co-constitutive. I understood also how oppressive such a construction of the divine is for women of faith who live and work in patriarchal settings. I need not, after all, choose between my faith and my belief in the full humanity of womankind.

While this text (and many similar texts which I have since read) forestalled an outright rejection of Evangelicalism on my part, it could not remedy all. My position within the faith and culture of my upbringing remains deeply problematic. On the one hand there is a powerful sense of belonging, of common identity, of shared experiences and understandings, and of shared (if sometimes tentative) belief. The experience of worship in words, sounds and spaces which have remained largely unchanged since the Disruption, is powerfully emotive, not least because such practices connect us, not only with our own pasts, but also with those of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, providing historical and familial continuity and a sense of rootedness, of belonging. Increasingly, as secularisation marginalises peoples of religion, and proscribes public expressions of faith, and as popular

discourse vilifies the distinctives of Scottish Presbyterianism reducing it to caricature, I feel protective of my people. I feel that they are disparaged, misunderstood and misrepresented, produced as *the repugnant cultural other* (HARDING, 1991:392) .

On the other hand there are many elements of our beliefs and practices which I need now to resist and reject, most notably the continued exclusion of women from ordination and the resulting masculinisation of church government and politics. Yet opportunities of expressing such resistance are limited (as detailed in previous chapters) as women have no role or voice within the official structures of the church and expressing opinions which run counter to the teachings of the church can have consequences for the perceived sincerity and authenticity of one's faith. Many of my female contemporaries have cut all ties with the church, some rejecting notions of faith, and others finding avenues for the practice of faith in more liberal churches. And yet, for me, neither of these is a satisfactory solution, faith and culture being inextricably intertwined. So I maintain a somewhat tenuous link meanwhile, aware that I am viewed as deviant, and that my continued presence is as much a source of discomfort for others as it is for myself.

There is also the creeping sense that the Free Church of today is different in essence to the Church of my grandparents. The influence of the American Christian Right seems to me to have brought a change of flavour – the tentative expressions of faith in terms of hope which were characteristic of Presbyterian religion being replaced by a more aggressive fundamentalism. Overt calls for a return to *Biblical Womanhood*, entreaties toward ministerial 'manliness' (*The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland*, May 2007), and pre-occupations with abortion and homosexuality are more reminiscent of American Evangelicalism than of Scottish Presbyterianism. And yet it is the very masculine severity associated with Calvinistic doctrines and practices which makes the denomination attractive to 'fundamentalists' from across the pond, despite huge cultural differences.

Of late, I have become intensely aware of my own bodily presence in the context of worship, a sense of being-looked-at-ness, or perhaps even its lack, as I mature towards the invisibility that characterises middle-aged women. And more acutely here than in any other context, I am aware of my singleness, of walking alone up the steps, through the avenue of hand-shakers, sitting alone in the pew. While others produce their families as corporeal representations of their successful and productive femininity, I produce the spectacle of single womanhood.

The need to understand how the women in my study make sense of their positioning within the practices and discourses of Presbyterian communities is, therefore, an intensely personal one. I remain perplexed about the silencing of women within Evangelical Presbyterianism in Scotland and about our complicity in this, and wonder to what extent my research participants have consciousness of themselves as silenced or oppressed. To what extent do they understand the faith to which they subscribe as necessitating or legitimising their subordinate position, and what reciprocities do they enjoy as a result of their seeming collusion in their own marginalisation? Are their identities as women of faith problematic and struggled over, and how do they negotiate a representation of themselves as full human persons despite the extreme tensions between structure and agency within their religious community?

Further, what, as a self-confessed feminist, do I think I am doing here? As Hampson noted, *for many Christians, being part of the church is so axiomatic that one struggles to articulate how it is that one is a feminist and a Christian* (HAMPSON, 1996b:x). If my identity as a feminist creates discomfort and dissonance for me within this faith community, the reverse is also true. The stance that much feminist writing takes on religion, and the views commonly held regarding the harm done by the church to women, call into question my standing, as a church member, in feminist communities. If women's experience of Presbyterianism is understood as self-evidently the product of patriarchy, then how am I to understand and negotiate my identities as a woman of this faith and a feminist? Is it possible, within the parameters of this *psalm-singing, sunset faith* (CARSWELL, 1986:368) of my

childhood, to craft out a religious identity which problematises and ultimately rejects patriarchy but retains a genuine and authentic faith in the God/man, Jesus?

Although it may surprise those outwith the communities of Evangelical Presbyterianism in Scotland, dialogue on matters of belief is counter-cultural, as Sharon MacDonald found in her anthropological work in Skye: *individuals have little opportunity to talk about religion except in terms of absolute faith or rejection* (MACDONALD, 1997:183). Doubts, and the voicing of them, tend to be regarded as transgressive:

true belief is logically divorced from doubt: belief is absolute, and divisions between those who have and have not received grace are clear-cut... there is no twilight of half-belief and belief intermingled with doubt.
(MACDONALD, 1997:176).

Doubt, therefore, is experienced as isolating and ‘othering’ and doubt is my lot in increasing measure as I age and reflect, read and observe. But if ours is a culture of tentative assurance, it is also a religion in which faith as small as a grain of mustard seed is faith indeed. And, like Catherine Carswell, I can *never quite abandon the idea that underneath are the everlasting arms* (CARSWELL, 1986:vii).

CHAPTER SEVEN

INVESTMENTS, DISSONANCES, AND RESOLUTIONS: AN ANALYSIS

This chapter attempts a drawing together and juxta-positioning of stories, and an exploration of their commonalities and diversities. In this way, multiple perspectives on similar lived experiences are utilised in an attempt to construct meanings and to probe and explore the problems raised. Further, through my deconstruction and reconstruction of the narratives, I particularly seek to identify areas in which the discourses of religion and professionalism merge and coalesce in the lived experience of respondents. The discussion which follows in this chapter, therefore, is offered in full acknowledgement that it is constructed by, and contingent on, my own understandings and perspectives.

In the first section ('Investments') I look first at the ways in which participants appear to invest in Protestant Christianity in terms of personal faith, attitudes to religion in schools, and understandings of their work in religious terms. I then go on to explore ways in which participants utilise discourses of 'naturalness' to understand their position in their social worlds, and at the processes through which such understandings 'embody' women in the classroom and in the church. In the next section ('Dissonances'), I explore the areas of conflict and dissonance which arise from these constructions, exploring the ways in which the investments they make effect the lived experience of the participants. Finally, in the third section ('Resolutions'), I offer an analysis of the means whereby women resolve these dissonances, the ways in which they appear to negotiate 'spaces to be' – spaces of fulfilment, comfort and autonomy – despite the seeming constraints of their discursive positionings.

INVESTMENTS

Investment In Protestant Christianity, And In Religious Notions Of Work

The data offer various indications of the ways in which the respondents are invested in Protestant Christianity and of the effects of that investment on their lived experience in the social worlds of home, school and church.

Personal faith

All the women in the study might be described as ‘women of faith’ yet none of the participants articulated directly the basis of the faith she claimed. Specific understandings of what it meant to them to be ‘a Christian’ were not made explicit. Yet all claimed it as important, and some as central, to their lives.

Discourses employed by the Evangelical women implied a direct, personal relationship with the divine, drawing on the Judaic-Christian concept of God as anthropomorphic. This is evidenced in their references to individual prayer, and to individual responsibility to the person of Jesus Christ.

Such an implication of face-to-face relationship with God was absent from the accounts offered by the women associated with the Church of Scotland who seemed to articulate their faith, not so much in terms of relationship with God, but rather in terms of moral values and behaviour: in Margaret’s words a *striving for what is right*, and in Jessie’s *it keeps me on the straight and narrow*. In keeping with the post-Enlightenment Christian tradition, they locate faith in the *moral sense* (WEBSTER, 1993:209). Neither refers to herself at any point as ‘a believer’, although both refer to Jesus as an historical figure on whose teachings they draw in the classroom and in their wider lives.

Jessie emphasised her perception that her faith was a private, individual matter practised *within myself*. At some levels this sits easily with conservative protestant

notions of individual moral accountability to God (BARTKOWSKI and GHAZAL READ, 2003). It resonates also with a certain reticence about articulating the substance of faith, characteristic of Scottish Presbyterianism (MACDONALD, 1997). However, there are tensions here, too. In the Scottish protestant tradition, coming together for 'public worship' on the first day of the week is central, and attendance at worship services involves both the outworking of faith through worship, and association - fellowship - with others like-minded. Indeed, for most followers of religion, faith is about more than belief. As Howell suggests, it is better understood as affective commitment than as a cognitively drawn notion of belief (HOWELL, 2007a), and that commitment is not only to a deity but to the people and places associated with the faith tradition. It is about community and belonging. Certainly it is so for Mairi and for Carron and Jane. It is even so for Katherine, although her current lived experience of this is about estrangement, about being on the outside, identities remaining from a past belonging. For the Church of Scotland women, the issues of agency and belonging within the church were rather different, and, it appears, less gendered. Jessie's desire to practise faith in private ways, and her various geographical positionings, rendered her relationship with the Kirk rather distant. Her view of the church and the minister as central to rural parish life, meant that her current relocation to the city brought with it a sense of dislocation in that respect. Margaret narrated her struggle to belong in the face of ecclesiastical structures which rendered her an outsider during childhood and young adulthood, despite her faithful adherence. However, her upbringing meant that she did not understand church membership or participation as a key marker of faith, and seemed happy to maintain a somewhat distanced and nominal relationship with the congregation in which she was now, technically, a member. Despite her upbringing within the Free Church of Scotland, Katherine displayed a complete unawareness of the positioning of women within that culture, and seemed baffled when I cited it as an issue. Jessie's description of faith and of church membership betrays little sense of community, or the need for it. Her story of faith is not one which she uses to claim group membership, or to establish and legitimate a right to belong (LINDE, 1993). While she speaks about the place of the church in rural communities in general terms, she does not appear to enjoy community in a relational sense within

the church. She is happy to leave her 'lines' in a community of which she is no longer a part.

Boundary work (BARTKOWSKI and GHAZAL READ, 2003) was in evidence to demark the borderland between Evangelical and non-Evangelical, from both sides of this division. This was evident from the Church of Scotland women in Jessie's description of her upbringing as *Christian to a point*, and her emphatic insistence that faith *didn't take over our lives*. It is also clear in Margaret's account when she describes her brother-in-law as *born again... into the Lord and all the rest of it* that this is offered in contrast to her own understanding of faith. There is something here, perhaps, of other-ing those who hold to 'fundamentalist' beliefs, thus producing Evangelical Christians as 'the repugnant cultural other' (HARDING, 1991) even in relation to 'mainstream' Christianity. Mairi experienced something of this in the attitudes of colleagues to her position with regard to alcohol and her resulting exclusion from wine-drinking events. From the Free Church women such boundary work is seen in Carron's portrayal of her Head Teacher as being a Christian *in a loose sense of the word* and in Jane's comments about the meaninglessness of religious practices in schools. Most revealing is Mairi's account of her rejection of membership in the Church of Scotland, on the grounds that the members of the Kirk were not Christians at all. Katherine's account alone is free of such boundary work, reflecting, perhaps, her own uncertain position in relation to these distinctions.

Boundary work was in evidence not only to police the borderland between Evangelical and non-Evangelical, but also around the religious /secular divide. The destabilising of the boundary between the sacred and the profane is one of the by-products of postmodernism, as terms such as 'religious' and 'secular' have become unstable signifiers (IVAKHIV, 2006). Yet respondents who belong to Evangelical churches appear to police the boundary between the religious and the secular in ways not employed by the other respondents. They appear to attempt to abstract religion from culture and thus to create and maintain spaces which are safe from the *corrosive forces* of modern life (GALLAGHER, 2003:9). There seems to be a

tension between this tendency on the part of Evangelical Presbyterians, and the Reformation ideology of religion as integral to civic life.

An ...important innovation achieved by the Reformation was the acceptance of the secular life, which removed the practice of godly life from within the confines of the monastery and extended it to include the activities of the ordinary believer (MARSHALL, 1980:16).

I would posit that, irrespective of one's faith position, it is helpful to understand culture and religion as inevitably and inextricably interwoven: as coalescent. At the very least, the practices and lived experiences of religion, which are the phenomena under investigation, are best understood in this way (GALLAGHER, 2003).

Understanding religion as culture is not necessarily to say that it is *only* culture, nor even that religion and culture are entirely consonant. Recognising the religious experiences of my participants as cultural is not to foreclose on the possibility that they are also experiences of a 'real' engagement with a 'real' deity. But it does shift the focus from the 'texts' of Presbyterianism to the lived experiences of the women who are adherents to those texts. Dittmer argues that

rather than essentializing 'religion' as a collection of texts and those who create privileged definitions of those texts... (we)... should view religion as systems of meaning derived from cultural resources by active agents, who come to affectively embody those meanings... (DITTMER, 2007:738).

For to ignore... the role of affect, emotion and corporeal practice... is to sideline... a key element in the circulation of religious-spiritual discourses and the identities that produce and are produced through them (Holloway (2006) in DITTMER, 2007:738).

Yet, while seeking to draw on such nuanced understandings of their religious position, I am still left with the insistence of some of my Evangelical respondents that it is not so, that faith is independent of culture, an insistence used by Jane, perhaps, to resolve dissonances emerging from her own perceived lack of cultural belonging to the church with which she has chosen to identify.

This range of understandings and portrayals of Christian faith from within the relatively bounded set of religious repertoires that is Scottish Presbyterianism emphasises the need to eschew constructions of religious identity which would define it narrowly as 'belief' (HOWELL, 2007a). Conceptualisations of faith,

rather, as commitment allow us to explore how the varied cognitive positions correspond to the lived experience of the respondents.

Attitudes to Religion in schools

Their varied understandings and expressions of faith affected the participants' engagement with school communities and their attitudes towards religion in this context. Five of the six women in the study (all but Jane) regarded Protestant Christianity as a cultural norm for Scotland, and defended continuing practices of religious observance in non-denominational schools in these terms. While there may exist no strong faith on a personal and individual level, there is an acceptance that the rituals associated with Christianity have a rightful place in Primary schooling, but the attitudes of the women differed slightly. Carron, from the Free Church of Scotland, regarded continuing religious observance as worthwhile despite her description of it as *nominal*. Mairi regarded practices in her own school as satisfactory because of her own input. The Church of Scotland women did not problematise the nature or quality of religious expression in schools, but they, too, expressed concern about processes of secularisation, and made clear links between secularisation and a perceived diminishing of moral standards in Scottish society.

Jane's stance on religious observance in schools stood out in contrast to the others. Despite her own committed faith position, she seemed to regard such practices as of no value, as merely tradition, devoid of any true religious significance. Such an attitude is more reminiscent of a separatist Evangelicalism, such as that of Jane's Baptist upbringing, than of Scottish Presbyterian Evangelicalism, which has, despite schisms, retained a firm belief in an Established church, being *advocates for a national recognition of religion – and... not voluntaries* (Thomas Chalmers, 1843).

The conceptual association between Protestantism, particularly in its Presbyterian form, and schooling in Scotland is thus reproduced by these women. For the Church of Scotland women in particular, the association seemed unproblematic, a view seemingly supported by the absence of resistance from colleagues or from parents to

continuing practices associated with Protestant Christianity. Further, even for Evangelical Christians, the *status quo* in Scottish Primary schools meant that they saw no need for separate Christian schooling.

Understanding Teaching as Christian Service

As Weber's theory about the relationship between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism would lead us to expect, the women in the study narrate their work as teachers as Christian service. It seems that the notion of sacrificial service to others as a Christian woman's particular vocation (PORTER, 2004) coalesces, for teachers, with long-established discourses of teaching-as-care (GRUMET, 1988, ACKER, 1995) to produce particular performances of femininity. (A more indepth treatment of the concept of self-sacrifice is offered later in this chapter.) A sense of their work as teachers as a form of Christian service came across strongly in four of the narratives. All the women make close connections between the moral work of teaching and the moral framework of Christianity, narrating the caring and nurture involved in their work as Christian service. Carron resists the temptation to look for a teaching position in a *more salubrious area* because of her sense of being *where God has put her*: her belief that she is placed in her current school setting almost as a form of Christian ministry to disadvantaged children. A discourse of 'service' is one which is central to Evangelicalism, and this might account for the way in which Carron and Jane construct their roles, and the way they conceptualise the relationship between their faith and their work. This resonates strongly with Weber's analysis of the Protestant psyche in which work (or, at least, the spirit of capitalism which motivates us toward work) is viewed as sacred when dedicated to God (WEBER, 1958). It is a calling to Christian service (WEBER, 1958). From the narrative offered about her and a Christian colleague being selected by her Head Teacher to counsel distressed children, it seems that such a construction may also be made by colleagues of Christian women in schools. Further, this understanding of schooling as a vehicle for social care makes Carron reject Christian schooling, which she perceives would separate her from the children with the greatest needs. She sees empathy with such children as at the core of her work. Similarly, Jane sees her work with children experiencing learning difficulties, *the ones who don't really fit*, as

ideally fitted to her faith. Jessie describes herself as a born teacher, and all but Jane talk in terms of some sense of vocation. So, even ostensibly outwith the discourse of Christian service, a sense of calling seemed key to the choice to teach, which resonates with Weber's sense of work as moral calling.

Jessie and Margaret also understand their work as Christian service, or at least as Christian, although this is expressed in slightly different terms, employing less of a consciously self-sacrificial attitude. Their accounts tie faith less closely to care, but emphasise rather the central importance of Christianity for providing a moral underpinning for their broader endeavours as teachers. Jessie comments that *a lot of the morals and principles, whilst I wouldn't be saying 'it tells you in the Bible to do this', that's what I'm putting into children*. Similarly, Margaret talks about bringing *Christian values* to bear on her work with children. Mairi also relates the spheres of religion and schooling in terms of the former providing an ethical framework in which to practice the latter. This resonates with notions of faith as moral behaviour, and, in turn, of Protestantism as moral guardianship.

Investment In 'Naturalness'

Throughout the interview data there are numerous references to the assumed 'naturalness' of womanhood in the contexts of home, school and church. These assumptions seem to be produced in association with the various religious and pedagogical discourses in play, as outlined below.

Mothering and Child-Centred Pedagogies

There is evidence in the data of the ways in which particular ideologies are promoted by those in power, and adopted by the women in the study in ways which seem legitimate and fitting, but ultimately act against the interests of the participants, as theories of hegemony would lead us to expect. In particular, discourses surrounding the child, those of child-centredness and the need to nurture, appear to operate in this way, particularly for the older women. Throughout the interviews, discourses of nurture and care were far more prominent than discourses around the cognitive

aspects of pedagogy. Child-centred Primary school pedagogy, to which all participants related closely, is premised on notions of nurture and care, and places the child, not the teacher, in central place, and technologies of 'love' are more explicit than those of cognition. The teacher's role, therefore, is that of facilitator, nurturer, or mother.

There seemed, for all, a very considerable investment in the construction of Primary teaching as 'natural' for women and this was manifest throughout the life course. What is key here is that a conceptualisation of teaching as mothering is not some kind of cultural accident, nor is it produced merely through the numerical prevalence of women in Primary schools, nor even the seeming 'naturalness' of mothering for women. Rather it has been a deliberate strategy of policy makers in the UK from the MacMillan sisters at the turn of the century (STEEDMAN, 1992), through the influential work of Winnicott in the 60s and 70s (STEEDMAN, 1992), to recent policy texts such as Curriculum 3-5 in Scotland (SCOTTISH-EXECUTIVE and LEARNING-TEACHING-SCOTLAND, 2003).

Far from dwelling in the basement of British educational thought, the mother-made-conscious is central to its ideology, and different voices, speaking at different moments over the last century and a half, have urged teachers to take upon themselves the structures of maternal thought (STEEDMAN, 1992:188).

The texture of the interview data is interwoven with references to teaching as nurture and as care, if not directly as mothering. Managerial practices (for example attainment target-setting) which subsequently required practitioners to conceptualise their role differently were the sources of deep dissonance and discomfort in that they thwarted the desire to perform nurture. So successful have been previous policies, it seems, in conflating the roles of teacher and mother-like-carer that that conflation seemed to be at the very heart of the teacher's self-understanding, and to persist throughout the life course, beginning with the very choice to teach.

While choosing to be a Primary teacher had varied provenances for participants, cultural notions of the 'naturalness' of teaching for women appeared to underpin the 'choice' for most, accompanied by limited opportunities, or at least limited

aspirations, for women, which were themselves rooted in gendered understandings of appropriate conduct and of essentialised attributes. As Carron articulated it, women within her social world didn't consider a range of options, but chose between nursing and teaching, if they chose to work outside the home at all. The somewhat homely and feminised nature of the Primary training-courses – dressmaking, craft-work - is recounted with some affection by Mairi and Katherine. Their experience of Initial Teacher Education seemed to confirm the notion of the 'naturalness' of teaching for women, rather than to challenge or disrupt it.

The association which almost all participants make (although Jessie resists) between work as a teacher in school and work as a mother at home, sits comfortably with this investment in teaching as 'natural'. Perhaps, as Steedman suggests, they model their mothering on good teaching, having come from the classroom where the proper relationships between mothers and children have been culturally established (STEEDMAN, 1985). Yet the data do not suggest that for these women, 'mothering' has become the intolerable burden which it was for Steedman (STEEDMAN, 1985). Although they do struggle to maintain the mothering demanded of them, they locate the struggle, not in the mothering, but in competing demands of bureaucracy and accountability. While this conceptualisation of teaching as motherhood, or at least as labour in which nurture and care is at the core, seemed to be one with which all participants, to varying degrees, were comfortable, it was also one which resulted in various other dissonances for the women in the study. These are detailed later in the chapter.

Steedman suggests a link between such conceptualisations of teaching as mothering and child-centred pedagogies which promote children's *self-directed activity through the school day* (STEEDMAN, 1992:186). The 'behind the scenes' work necessary to run 'child-centred' pedagogies, such as the Integrated Day, and the passive watching of children's engagement with the learning environment once the good house-keeping is in place, resonate with particular cultural constructions of motherhood. *The teacher was to become a passive observer, watching the unfolding of development. Like that of mothers, teachers' passivity is vital to the possibility of*

children's activity (WALKERDINE, 1990:34). They resonate also with notions of self-sacrifice on the part of the woman teacher, and render women teachers less visible.

Walkerdine argues that child-centred pedagogy forms part of an apparatus of social regulation (WALKERDINE, 1984), where the power of the teacher shifts from the overt power of the dictator to the covert, passive monitoring of children's development. Thus the technology of love replaces that of fear. Within this 'regime of truth' (WALKERDINE, 1984), the child develops in a 'facilitating environment' while the teacher (and the mother) become, not even facilitators, but rather merely environment, their role primarily the passive observation of active learning. The woman teacher's aptitude for nurture, based on a notion of naturalised femininity, fits her as a facilitator, a reproducer, of the knowing subject (the child), but not as a knower in her own right.

Such discourses emphasise the individuality of the child, and the need for teachers to tailor their teaching – and by implication their care – to this individuality. Indeed, the need to focus on children as individuals, and to do so with empathy, was very present in the narratives, particularly so for Carron and for Jane, involved with Learning Support, and also notable in Jessie's account where she emphasises the individual happiness of the child as being of prime and central importance. Only Katherine narrates an example of resisting this discourse, in her acknowledgement that she left the job because of her interactions with a child. She seems, like Steedman, to break *the taboo of speaking out about women's discontent of being with children* (TAMBOUKOU, 2000:464)

Such a performance of care as is drawn from teachers invested in this ideology results in a relationship with children, and perhaps also with the school as a 'family unit', which is perhaps more familial than 'professional'. Carron spoke of how her sense of responsibility for children extended to pastoral support for their parents, and Margaret spoke of a deep emotional investment in her place of work, an investment linked both to children as individuals, and to their parents and families. Her sense of

regard (love) and responsibility towards them transcended that of workplace loyalty, resulting in a sense of guilt on having retired, and a continued time investment on a voluntary basis. In this sense, the school has become a model family (TAMBOUKOU, 2000). This, in turn, resonates with the associations made by the participants between choosing to teach and familial loyalties.

Child centred ideologies, therefore, to which women in the study adhere if only for reasons of chronology, seem a good 'fit' for gendered constructions of Christian service. Self-abnegation seems so axiomatic to both Christian womanhood and to teaching within a child-centred ideological paradigm that they appear to coalesce for women, particularly, perhaps, Evangelical women.

Ideology of separate spheres

Such an investment in the 'naturalness' of nurture for women sits easily with an ideology of separate spheres, such as is made explicit in Evangelical teaching, but is, too, implicit in secular discourses. For example, the fact that Carron perceived her career choice to be so limited, even in the mid seventies, when social attitudes to gendered norms were changing in the wake of second wave feminism, is perhaps reflective of the way traditional gendered norms lingered within Evangelical Presbyterian communities in Scotland. And yet, Margaret made similar observations. For all participants, gender could be said to be an over-determining factor in their life trajectory (KEHILY, 1995). All the women in the study foregrounded their role as wife and mother, thus centralising, not just family, but the particular role of the woman within the family. They spoke of their role often in terms of practical domestic service of husband and children. Carron expressed discomfort in what she perceived to be a disruption of the ideology of separate spheres in her own life, when she became, in effect, the bread-winner, during her husband's illness. Carron's description of her role as minister's wife emphasised the hospitality expected of her in addition to the mothering of teenage children. Thus, she fulfils her role as *Martha*, (Luke 10:40-42) taking upon herself all which that signifies in terms of the woman's preoccupation with materiality at the expense of spirituality (PORTER, 2004). Here too, hers is the passive facilitator's role, the role

that allows others to become the persons more valued, those with knowledge and with spirituality.

The participants were not asked directly about the Evangelical practice of wifely submission and the extent to which that featured in their own relationships or its influence on the way they positioned themselves as wives (BARTKOWSKI and GHAZAL READ, 2003, GALLAGHER, 2003, INGERSOLL, 2003). Nor did any of the participants raise it directly. But some of the flavours of this ideology, and of the theology which spawned it (the Creation Order) did emerge in the narratives. Carron observed that men think differently, that they lack insight into emotions, that they lack sensitivity and creativity, but that they are *book-worm sort of thing*. This is reminiscent of an understanding of gender in which women hold emotionality for the couple, and behave with sensitivity towards the man who holds knowledge and rationality. When asked, all suggested the need and desirability for more men in Primary teaching. On the one hand this might be read as contradictory to notions of teaching as mothering, or as drawing on the 'natural' capacities of women. It might seem at first to disrupt an ideology of separate spheres. But the flavour of the women's replies suggests rather that men are needed to compensate for what doesn't come 'naturally' to women teachers. Carron saw male teachers as necessary gender role-models for boys, and Jane saw women teachers as teaching in a *girlie way* which was damaging to boys.

Carron, Mairi and Jane all narrated, to various extents, an acceptance of limitation and containment as women in the church, and reported considerable involvement in work traditionally acceptable for women, such as catering and working with children, the unseen and under-valued service-behind-the-scenes which is the lot of women in Evangelical churches (PORTER, 2004). Carron and Mairi, however, were happy to acknowledge this as problematic up to a point, with Carron allowing that women's gifts were under-utilised, and Mairi bemoaning the pace of change in relation to the positioning of women in the church. Yet they seemed to view their limitations as an inevitable part of the 'package', and to accept very circumscribed roles in the relative absence of meaningful agency or negotiated decision-making.

The ideologies of the naturalness of mothering and of separate spheres for women and men are confirmed by participants' constructions of singleness. This is seen most strikingly in Mairi's account of the matron in her school hostel. She is constructed almost as a grotesque witch-like figure - strict, heartless, Victorian - and this is closely tied in the telling to her status as a *maiden lady*, which is offered in contrast to the more human married woman matron in the boy's hostel. Thus singleness is linked to a distorted and unnatural femininity. Margaret also speaks rather disparagingly about her aunts as 'spinsters'. The very construction of teaching as motherhood is itself problematic for women who are not mothers, as Steedman found (STEEDMAN, 1985), and as I experienced myself. A woman who does not mother is a woman who does not care.

Embodying Naturalness

Whilst I contend that the body is shaped and produced through discourse – the socially constructed body – I want to avoid the temptation to reduce the body to discourse, thus overlooking its materiality, its physical presence in the lived experience of respondents.

If we understand gender as performative in Butler's sense (BUTLER, 1990), then we would expect to observe participants engaging in acts which arise from social interactions within their various social locations and which are culturally associated with bodies encoded as 'woman'. That is not merely to understand bodies as *the passive bearers of cultural imprints... the blank pages on which meanings are 'inscribed'* (CONNELL, 2000:58). Rather it acknowledges both the materiality and the agency of bodies. What might be deduced from the lived experience of embodiment in the social settings of church and school?

Bodies in the Classroom

The very discourses of mothering, of child-centredness and of separate spheres depend on the location of social actors within bodies, and, in turn, serve to embody

women, or at least to re-establish the equation of woman with the body, which leads to the reduction of women to bodies. Through them, we see the ways in which women are *constrained into gender* (JACKSON and SCOTT, 2001:16). Primary teaching itself has been conceptualised as bodywork (BIKLEN, 1995, ESTOLA and ELBAZ-LUWISCH, 2003, BACKET and MILBURN, 2001). The pedagogical discourses outlined above are those in which women's bodies are understood as incapacitated for reason – fitted for the reproduction of persons rather than for the production of knowledge (WALKERDINE, 1990). The passivity, receptiveness and nurturing to which they are called is performed in bodily acts of looking at, listening to, touching and holding children.

The bodily positions of caring and loving have their basis in women's relational morality. In these positions teachers aim to interact in a sensitive way, paying attention to every pupil as an individual by touching, a gaze with trust, supporting words or physical closeness (ESTOLA and ELBAZ-LUWISCH, 2003:712).

By rendering up their bodies as 'docile' and 'useful' in this way, they habitually give power upwards, as from the capillary to the central organ (FOUCAULT, 1975).

Such pedagogical discourses rely heavily on particular spatial arrangements within classrooms (ones which allow for movement and choice) and organising this material environment is a bodily activity for teachers. Within these spatiotemporal arrangements, the denial of self is again manifest in the 'taboo' of the 'teacher's desk', in an ideology which so centralised the child that the notion of a teacher's space became illegitimate. This resulted in *ignoring the body of the teacher, making no place for it, sending a message that the whole person is probably not important, she or he is nobody* (ESTOLA and ELBAZ-LUWISCH, 2003:710).

This is reminiscent of Marxist constructs of relations between work and mental and physical labour, in which work experienced as physical and distanced from mental labour *stifles and restricts the free expression of mind and body* (Marx in MCGUIRE, 1990:291). The physical heaviness of teaching is documented by Estola (ESTOLA, 2008) who emphasises the physical toll of bending to help with dressing, shoes and toileting, the noise and the standing, and the sustained 'presence' of the teacher's body in the classroom as she makes her body continually available to

children. To understand Primary teaching as physical labour does not simply mean that it is hard physical work – although it is. It also suggests that *teachers feel their work in their bodies* (ESTOLA and ELBAZ-LUWISCH, 2003:706).

The physical demands of teaching find expression in some of the narratives. The most notable example is in Katherine's account of leaving her job, occasioned by an accumulation of minor irritants, of which the final straw was the requirement to bend to tie shoe-laces despite chronic back-pain. The retired teachers – Margaret, Katherine and Mairi - all spoke of their increasing inability to cope with the physicality of the job, of being *useless* and *unable to function* as a result of the toll on their bodies, and even Carron, at the age of 50, cited this as an issue. She stressed the tiredness that she felt, even as a Learning Support teacher, and commented that she would feel more tired in the classroom environment. She acknowledged 'the grind' of repetitive routine activities, such as collecting dinner money, which were at once physical and mental.

It is not merely physical labour that makes teaching 'bodywork' for a woman, but also the physical nearness of children, their bodily proximity to hers, the almost primeval sensuality of their physical presence evincing affection, the desire to touch (BIKLEN, 1995). Teachers of young children not only continually see and hear children; they feel them on their skin, the hand on her arm, the tug on her skirt. This is clear in its negative sense in Katherine's departure narrative, in her description of the corridor packed with bodies, and her dealing with the bodily needs of the children to the detriment of her own body. There are flavours of it in a more positive sense in Jessie's narrative of working alongside children in nursery settings.

Bodies in the Church

The data revealed little awareness on the part of the participants around their embodied presence in worship, or the policing of their bodies in religious discourse more generally. Mairi did offer her tale of resistance in attending church in Stornoway hatless, an act to which, at the time, attached more risk than the 'outsider' might imagine (see MACDONALD, 1997:180). Similar concern over dress emerged

in Mairi's account of the visiting minister's attitude to Christian women and make-up. Make-up was a marker, not of grace, but of its lack, and Mairi was assumed to have 'fallen away'. My own lived experience of failing to conform to norms of dress in worship settings resonates too. For a young woman to wear jeans to church was for her to bring her spiritual standing into question. She must use her body to perform the markers of moral rectitude – head coverings, modest apparel – and to eschew the markers of worldliness – make-up, 'masculine' clothing. In this way, Presbyterian discourse identifies women with the body, distancing men from the body and from the limitedness of embodiment.

There are certain socio-cultural meanings attached to attendance, to bodily presence, at church. In Sharon Macdonald's ethnographic work (MACDONALD, 1997) she attempted to gather data without unnecessary transgression in the eyes of the community, so she attended many services including communion and mid-week prayer meetings, and attended hatted and carrying a Gaelic Bible. Her behaviour attracted rumour and intrigue as to whether or not her interest was purely academic. This finds some resonance in Katherine's narrative. Her dilemma, whether or not to accompany her mother to services in the Free Church, illustrates her awareness of the social meanings which will attach to her bodily attendance. (Further treatment of this incident is offered below.)

Mairi was clearly aware of a sense of herself as an embodied woman when she narrated her 'coming forward' story, her account of coming into church membership, and having to 'appear before' the Kirk Session, a large group of male elders. She stressed her sense of being alone and scared. This requirement for acceptance into membership of a woman's physical presence in a room full of men in spiritual authority was recollected as something of an ordeal.

Concerns with visibility were evident in other ways. Mairi's account of her own unwillingness to take up position in the lectern on the rare occasions that she is asked to precent during church services evidences her attempt to minimise her bodily visibility. When asked why she didn't go forward as the men did she replied *I just*

wouldn't think of it. To take up a physical space which is the preserve of men in the context of worship is not to produce one's body as an acceptable spectacle (HOWSON, 2004) rather it is to transgress a gendered and spiritual norm and thus perhaps to invite one's very body to be conceptualised as transgressive. *If my culture holds that femaleness is dangerous, polluting ensnaring, and I happen to be embodied as female, then my self-experience is likely to be influenced by this cultural evaluation* (MCGUIRE, 1990:288). Rather, Mairi chooses to perform her gender by restricting her bodily presence to the spaces encoded 'woman'. So a role which for men involves visibility (and thus status) is performed by women 'behind the scenes' from the pew. And, while she insists no-one would 'stop' her from precenting from the front in the usual manner, no-one, no church-leader, suggests that she should. To do so would not only disrupt the social norms of place, but also distort her femininity, occasioning the "vertigo of terror" caused by the *possibility of losing social sanction, of leaving a solid social station and place* (Butler in SALIH, 2004:27).

This section has outlined the ways in which participants appeared to invest in Christian faith and in teaching as integral to their sense of self. Further it explored the gendered discursive practices attendant on these investments and how these operate to construct women in particular ways, and to inscribe on their bodies certain behaviours and dispositions. In the next section, I explore the areas of conflict and dissonance which emerge from these embodied investments.

DISSONANCES

Their embodied investment in the 'naturalness' of their roles as women, as teachers and as mothers, and the inter-relation between this and their investment in particular gendered religious ideologies leads to areas of conflict and results in certain dissonances for the women involved. I outline these below.

Teaching (working) itself

First, work itself is an area of conflict. Mothering and paid work are constructed in opposition (BIKLEN, 1995) by all participants, and there are clear tensions in their narratives between teaching as moral work (even as Christian calling for some) and their need to be at home. The inherent contradiction here is that work which is itself at some levels a performance of self-sacrifice has to be sacrificed to adequately perform mothering in the home. While Primary teaching as work draws together the paradoxical elements of paid labour and mothering, it also exists in opposition to mothering. As a result, the possibilities of escape from, or fulfilment in, either are thwarted.

The academic

Secondly, academia is an area of conflict. There is a link between this conceptualisation of teaching as mothering and the dichotomy which my participants maintain between the academic and 'good practice' in teaching.

...the precise virtue of the 'mother-made-conscious' is that she does not have to be very clever... the feminine is characterised by the enforced and socially approved female virtues of triviality, timidity, conservatism and anti-intellectionism (STEEDMAN, 1992:191).

The 'naturalness' of the role for women also implies that little formal education or training is needed (FORRESTER, 2005).

This dichotomy is seen first in attitudes to Initial Teacher Education. Disaffection with Initial Teacher Education was common to all the participants, albeit to varying

degrees. This seemed to be conceptually linked with a low regard for what was perceived as academic learning or knowledge compared to a higher regard for what was understood as experiential learning or knowledge. Such an emphasis is well documented in studies of Primary school teachers (GITLIN et al., 1992). There is a consensus that the course content was useless and irrelevant, and that it failed to prepare adequately for the practice of teaching. For example, Carron regarded her Return to Teaching course more highly than her ITE course because of its emphasis on placement. This process of dichotomising academic work and the practice of teaching is one through which ITE practitioners are positioned as other, as the 'They', perceived as powerful to define 'good practice', but as distanced from the realities of teaching as work. For Jane, on the other hand, the only participant who had experienced university life prior to embarking on Initial Teacher Education, it wasn't an academic approach, but its relative lack, which spawned her disregard – *hatred* – for the course. She regarded the approach she experienced in ITE as one which dictated good practice in the absence of reflection and dialogue, and which required her to be a passive recipient. For her, this stood out in negative contrast to her undergraduate degree.

Jessie stood alone in regarding her college course as of value to professional life and as providing a good grounding for her future career. But even she limits its value to the professional, rather than talking in terms of personal development or fulfilment. None of the participants constructs her Initial Teacher Education in terms of educational fulfilment at a personal level. None presents her experience of higher education as transformative, as offering any intellectual awakening or liberation. If they have failed, therefore, to find in education *the transitional space that is essential for reflection upon themselves and their lives* (TAMBOUKOU, 2000:475), they are surely ill equipped to understand their own discursively formed positions as unpromoted women teachers.

As I have suggested, the woman teacher's aptitude for nurture, based on a notion of naturalised femininity, fits her as a facilitator, a reproducer, of the knowing subject (the child), but not as a knower in her own right.

The production of knowledge is therefore separated from its reproduction and split along a sexual division which renders production and reproduction the natural capacities of the respective sexes (WALKERDINE, 1990:137).

The concept of masculinity becomes identified with those characteristics belonging to the well-trained mind. Those thought processes that are abandoned by the trained mind become the province of the female mind, certainly the quintessential untrained mind, and hence come to constitute the feminine (ATHERTON, 1993:26).

This too resonates with the attitudes to knowledge displayed by participants, particularly in the discussions around their own education. With the exception of Jane, knowing was not legitimate in itself, but only insofar as it facilitated knowing in the children for whom they care.

There is a tension, too, between the woman's relationship with the intellect and her investment in Protestant Christianity, although this is ambiguous and contested. Her association with nurture and mothering, itself at the core of female Christian identity, precludes her investment in the academic, in the senses outlined above. In addition, within Evangelical Presbyterianism her exclusion from the ministry illegitimises any investment on her part in theological education at a formal level. *Women who study theology say they are often dismissed as working against their own purposes, as anti-woman...* (JULE, 2008:72). Bible discourse also, in places, equates wisdom with maleness, as in the book of Proverbs, entirely addressed to young men seeking wisdom (JULE, 2008). However, as we have seen, Presbyterianism in Scotland has consistently emphasised the importance of literacy in general, and theological literacy in particular, in the life of the believer, and this has been seen as important for men and for women.

Involvement in policy

Third, there are dissonances around participants' involvement, or lack of involvement, in structures of power and policy making. It may be that the disaffection with Initial Teacher Education has implications for the ways in which teachers view particular sets of professional knowledge. Theories of pedagogy – and possibly also those of social justice – are thus constructed as the domain of the

'They', a leadership class (HUMES, 1986) who are perceived as at once powerful and controlling, and at the same time ignorant concerning the realities of classroom practice and experience.

It should not surprise, therefore, that the passivity which appears to have been at the core of the Primary teacher self, and which itself was a pedagogical strategy, should manifest itself also outwith the classroom, in the teacher's relationships with powerful others. Margaret, Katherine and Mairi were apt to construct distance as appropriate in their relationships with promoted staff, particularly Head Teachers, although Carron, Jessie and Jane did not appear to have the same deferential view of leadership, and were more inclined to resist directives or to engage in negotiation over matters of importance, rather than acquiesce in practices with which they were uncomfortable. Both Mairi and Katherine included tales which cast their Head Teachers as protectors, particularly from the unwelcome intrusion of policy. Katherine knew nothing of 5-14 because one Head Teacher had 'protected' the entire school from it, while Mairi's Head Teacher took it on herself to re-interpret local authority policy so that it wouldn't impact on Mairi's teaching of RME.

To varying degrees, passivity was played out also in the ways in which participants positioned themselves in relation to policy. While the individuals' knowledge of policy varied between's Katherine's seeming unawareness of the existence of 5-14, to Jane's, Carron's and Jessie's considerable acquaintance with Curriculum for Excellence, none of the participants had themselves reported any involvement in the processes of policy formulation. Rather they spoke of policy innovations as *appearing, landing, or coming in*. Margaret and Carron regarded policy innovation as for the most part linguistic, and both Margaret and Mairi offer a response common to teachers by claiming to be already engaged in practising what policy-makers presented as 'innovation'. (Many policy innovations, indeed, describe themselves as endorsing 'good practice', and this is particularly the case with Curriculum for Excellence. In this way policy makers seem almost to coax teachers into changing their practice by drawing on a seemingly shared ideology to persuade teachers that what they are being asked to do emerges from their own 'best practice'.)

To the extent to which a managerialist approach to Primary schooling has affected school cultures in Scotland (and this is markedly less so than in England), it creates particular dissonances for women invested in discourses of mothering and of child-centredness. An emphasis on activities that can be measured – notably testing – disrupts the continuity of caring, and shifts the focus of schooling from the child to the institutional ‘output’, in this case test-results. (Of course, it is true that assessment long pre-dates managerialism in schools, but I am concerned with the use made of assessment in terms of teacher monitoring and control, rather than the deployment of assessment as such.)

The ascendancy of managerialism in schools encompasses increased surveillance, monitoring, evaluation through assessment and measurement, and judgement. For teachers, a discourse of individual accountability predominates in this kind of environment and promotes the processes of self-monitoring, self-management and pupils’ results... and teachers’ work is increasingly reconstituted in terms of outcomes (FORRESTER, 2005:275).

Such a dissonance between ideal and practice was evident in all the accounts, with the possible exception of Jane’s.

Religion in school

Fourthly, while faith and teaching as work seem consonant in many ways, dissonances arise in this area for participants. For Christian women teachers, dissonances appear to arise when the need to nurture the whole child is frustrated by the hegemony of the secular-normative. Both Carron and Mairi expressed deep frustrations over their understanding that their professional positions as teachers limited the extent to which they could share their faith with the children. While they accepted this perceived restriction as fitting (that they were called to teach rather than to evangelise) it was clear that this was an area of considerable dissonance for them, and that they understood their performance of care to be in some sense fractured or discontinuous. They understand themselves to have a formula for the fulfilment of the children’s social and emotional needs which they are unable to apply. This is characteristic of the missionary drive inherent in Evangelicalism, in which faith is regarded not as a private matter, but rather as the answer to a common

human need: something that ought to be shared because of its positive potential for others.

What is fascinating about this is the way in which a woman like Carron herself employs discourses of religious/secular binary which position her and people who share her faith in negative ways, and which create such dissonances for her. It is paradoxical that she is absolutely invested in what she understands to be the truth of Christian narrative and the redemptive and restorative potential of Christianity for the children for whom she cares so deeply, and also fully aware of those historic links between Presbyterianism and schooling in Scotland which could legitimise the practice of Christianity in this context, she nevertheless constructs as wholly inappropriate the sharing of her faith in the classroom. This is testament to the ideological power of discourses which create a dualism between the religious and the secular in modern society. And this laying aside of the religious in deference to the secular in turn becomes a form of self-abnegation.

The Self

But most fundamentally, perhaps, investment in such gendered educational and religious ideologies conflicts with the very notion of self, or perhaps rather the legitimacy of self-interest.

Self-sacrifice is at the core of Christian teaching: the very essence of the gospel.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-8 AV).

In the Christian tradition, Christ exercised *Kenosis* (a Greek term from the verb *kenoo*, to empty). That is, he emptied himself, he made himself nothing, exchanging the glory of his deity for service, humiliation, misunderstanding and death. He did so willingly, actively laying aside his own interests and his divine attributes (while retaining some essential attributes, like love) and sacrificing his own interests to

those of others (MACLEOD, 1998). In turn, the follower of Christianity is asked to *deny himself* (sic), and *take up his cross* (Matthew 16:24 NIV). Indeed, the apostolic directive is that all Christians should have the same attitude as Christ. In the original context (Philippians 2:7), this is aimed at the whole church, but particularly at the (male) leadership. Self-sacrifice, is then, the most pivotal notion in Christianity. Further, a spirit of asceticism was (and is) characteristic of Calvinist religion (MARSHALL, 1980, WEBER, 1958), and, given the Reformation ideologies surrounding the congruence of religious and civil life, a doctrine of asceticism is bound to impact the every day lives of believers. In addition, self-sacrifice is at the core of Weber's 'Protestant work ethic'. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the sacrifice of self should be central also to the identities and behaviours of women who identify as Christian and Protestant, that they should seek to show *agape, that love which does not count the cost, which, without regard for self, thinks only of another* (Hampson (1996) in PORTER, 2004:61).

What is problematic is the extent to which such identities and behaviours are caught up in the hegemonic processes of gender and power to such an extent that self-sacrifice itself becomes gendered, and self-abnegation seems to be the Christian woman's particular heritage. Such an understanding of Christian service as necessarily self-less is one which Porter (2004) suggests is constructed by Evangelicals in gendered ways.

In the understanding of human relationships which subordinates women to men and which associates care and nurture with femaleness, self denial itself finds a gendered expression within Christianity. Service of others is seen as a woman's particular vocation. So, while self-denial is part of Christian identity for men, this is normally applied within the parameters of a socially constructed masculinity. Therefore it produces different consequences than does self-denial for women (PORTER, 2004:61).

This can be seen both in Biblical narrative, and in the discourses of Christianity and, perhaps especially, Evangelical Christianity. The Biblical narrative first offers us Eve, as 'helpmeet' for Adam, and this (despite the fact that the term is most often used of God himself) has produced women as ancillary to men, the central players, whose interests supercede hers. Eve's role in the forbidden fruit episode leads to notions of women as morally weak which leads in turn to the perception that they

must make particular atonement by sacrificing their own interests. Mary, the mother of Jesus, acquiesced in God's will with neither choice nor consultation: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word* (Luke 1:38 AV).

Further, Christian tradition has offered the doctrine of submission, and Christian leaders have privileged discourses which call on women to sacrifice themselves as their Christian duty. Take, for example, Pope Jean-Paul II's words to the UN World Conference on Women (1995) about

those ordinary women who reveal the gift of their womanhood by placing themselves at the service of others in their everyday lives. For in giving themselves to others each day, women fulfill their deepest vocation (cited in PORTER, 2004:62).

Also note what was said of one, Mrs Tulloch, wife of a 19th century Principal of St Mary's College, St Andrews, by her husband's biographer.

Mrs Tulloch was one of those women who possess certain miraculous resources in the depths of the self-abnegation, spontaneous and unconscious, which is the rule of their being, and who respond to all that is needed of them, however small their strength may be, failing never to the call (OLIPHANT, 1889:329).

In this way, women's self-sacrifice serves to perpetuate and endorse male privilege, to augment the *patriarchal dividend* (CONNELL, 1995). Given the social and structural inequalities within which women live and work, and the ways in which self-denial becomes 'naturalised' for women, there are implications in such self-denial for their very personhood.

...the theological tradition of self-denial with its gendered expression that is part of a context of inequality and socially constructed femininity, provides divine imperative for women's neglect of themselves, exacerbating their situation and robbing them of aspects of their own personhood (PORTER, 2004:64).

It is almost as if women are called upon to practice *Kenosis*, that is to deny aspects of their very self-hood, to empty themselves of their very humanity, just as Christ did of his deity, in the performance of service to others. Such a conceptualization of the willing surrender of power sits comfortably with understandings of power as hegemonic, the giving up of power as in part ideological and consensual, and with Foucaultian notions of capillary power, power from the extremities returning to the heart.

There is little documentary evidence that the church hierarchy appeals to the *Kenosis* principle as such in support of their plea for submission and obedience on the part of women. But the principle is very prominent in preaching and other forms of Christian discourse, usually in association with pleas for humble self-denial, voluntary submission, self-renouncing love and the cultivation of a servant mentality. It is also associated with the idea that we have no rights, only duties. Associated with this is the further notion that self-assertiveness and standing up for one's rights is to be seen as an evil; and along with this goes a passive acquiescence in the *status quo*.

Linked to this is the use of the *Kenosis* principle as the basis for a specious appeal to women to exercise their Christian liberty by foregoing their rights as women. They should freely choose not to be feminists. For example, the relatively moderate (on gender issues), Stackhouse, recognises that we would all benefit from the full emancipation of women, and we should therefore all strive for it (STACKHOUSE, 2005). Women should seize the opportunity to be free and whole, untrammelled by patriarchy. But he immediately adds (invoking "the supreme example of Christ" in Philippians 2:3-8):

the social disruption of full-fledged feminism may come at too high a price. Disturbed families, churches and societies may become more hostile toward the Christian religion – and likely with little or no actual gain in freedom for women. Therefore, this difficult and unattractive possibility of using one's liberty to freely constrain oneself continues to confront us (STACKHOUSE, 2005:48).

He continues:

Freedom from gender discrimination is an important implication of the gospel. Yet we should at least sometimes forgo this particular liberty, among many others, in favour of the greater liberty given us to do whatever is necessary to further the most fundamental message of the gospel (STACKHOUSE, 2005:49).

The narratives are rich with examples of such discourses of self-sacrifice and the eschewing of the legitimacy of self-interest. Good mothering is central to each narrative, and in all but Margaret's case, this requires the sacrifice of career during the children's formative years. Carron emphasises that she chooses to work in

challenging circumstances as a form of service to God and others. All, to varying degrees, describe the role of wife as involving the privileging of the husband's interests over her own, be it in terms of career, or merely his need to sleep rather than to provide child-care. Mairi sacrifices practices central to her sense of self – like taking part in open prayer – to accommodate the sensibilities of others. Here again the woman is not, so that others can be. In work environments, the women seem not to consider their own comfort. The material conditions of the workplace featured strongly only in Katherine's account, but were mentioned in passing in others. Crowded, noisy, dusty environments have become so axiomatic to the teacher's lived experience, perhaps, that they do not aspire to anything different. Acker argues that the construction of Primary teaching as 'natural' for women encourages us to overlook the fact that the classroom is a workplace (ACKER, 1999). The distinctions between labour and love, she suggests, are blurred. This, in turn, facilitates a discounting of the material conditions in which teachers work.

The ideal child-centred teacher (like the perfect housewife) becomes invisible – we see nothing but a happy bustle of active children – while her needs, her work, and her working conditions remain hidden (ACKER, 1999:104).

And this commitment is one which involves denial of self, as describe by Carron:

You know it's not necessarily the easiest of life, but you don't always choose the easiest. I suppose you know that you can go to the Lord if you are struggling and having somewhere to go for strength for each day.

Feminisms

Any positive engagement with Feminism then falls foul of this sense of self-abnegation, and indeed, women in the study appeared, like the participants in Callaghan's study, to have very little interest in feminism (CALLAGHAN et al., 1999). All the responses to my questions about their engagement with the feminist movement could be best summed up as vague and nebulous. Jane regarded feminism as *someone else's war*, appearing baffled by the suggestion that gender inequalities might still be extant. Indeed, she goes further than this to imply that men and boys are the disadvantaged groups. Similarly, Katherine could narrate no experiences of discrimination or disadvantage, or recall any interest or even observations of the women's movement despite being a young woman in the 1960s. In Jessie's account,

despite a willingness to reflect positively on some of the endeavours of feminism, she regards the 'problem' as solved and distances herself from involvement and identification with the women's movement. Further, she is concerned to protect and maintain what she sees as male chivalry towards women, and thus engages in a playing-out of difference (WALKERDINE, 1989). Jane goes further than the others in expressing some antipathy towards the women's movement, citing perceived incidents of male disadvantage. All the women in the study, from both denominations, ultimately reject the identity politics of feminism.

This finds resonance in the work of Gallagher with American Protestant Evangelicals. ...*Evangelical antifeminism is part of a broader gender conservatism that serves as a symbolic boundary marker of religious sub-culture and identity* (GALLAGHER, 2004:453). She emphasises that, despite this popular narrative that antifeminism is integral to the Evangelical psyche, and central to the construction of Evangelical identity, many Evangelicals in her study were vague and disengaged from the issue in interviews. It seems that, while in a general sense they regarded it as something of a threat (although they were also willing to acknowledge some of its achievements as positive), many were unable to manufacture a direct response to her questions, and located this inability in their perception of feminism as something far removed from the reality of their lived experience.

Seeking Place

The delegitimising of self-interest leads, in turn, to a disinclination for women to seek 'place' in church or school in ways that might have disrupted or challenged their marginal positions. For Carron and Mairi, the problematic nature of women's positions was brought into focus most sharply in tales told, not of their own lives, but those of their adult daughters. Mairi's younger daughter had been a member of the church but is now estranged and Mairi attributes her current disaffection with the church, and with the faith, in part at least, to the limited aspirations for and expectations of women within this community. She reasoned that, as an Editor of a prestigious journal, her daughter would *probably find it hard to keep her mouth shut*. Carron's daughter's story of participation in the Free Church is particularly poignant.

Not only is the question she raises – that of women’s participation in the weekly prayer meeting – deemed to be off-limits, so illegitimate that no answer is deemed necessary. But the very act of her raising it renders her deviant. Not only is she as a young woman silenced within worship by the practice that only men ‘lead’ in prayer. She is silenced within the church community, within the fellowshiping church, by the need for ‘unity’. The irony of such a preoccupation with unity is that it renders its stated aim impossible. If women are to be accorded full personhood within a worshipping community, unity bought by the exclusion of women cannot be understood to be unity at all.

Both these tales illustrate, not only the ways in which women’s voices are constructed as illegitimate, but also the way in which hegemonic processes render women’s voices deviant and aggressive, their speaking out a form of attack, a divisive strategy, rather than merely a bid for personhood. In this context, a woman’s bid for personhood is disruptive. This construction of women’s voices legitimises their repression, and inhibits their future expression. Thus women ‘give’ power upward *like blood returning to the heart* (ALFORD, 2000:125), re-legitimising the dominant position of men. Similarly, Jane’s response to my implied challenge to the *status quo* for women in the Free Church, is to stress that women’s needs, if there are such, should not be allowed to disrupt what she understand as the more important values of the church. Such sentiments find acceptance even from commentators who would otherwise support feminist endeavour (STACKHOUSE, 2005).

Even where women enjoy relatively egalitarian situations, like being permitted to pray in public, these concessions are unstable and liable to withdrawal. Mairi, for example, enjoys the privilege of open prayer, but has to forego that on occasion to facilitate the sensibilities of more conservative worshippers. The concessions, given by men in authority, can be withdrawn on impulse and no resistance is expected or given. And in this instance, the silencing is of a very profound nature; silenced, not only before humanity, but before God. Similarly, Mairi’s work with children, which she narrated as fulfilling, was both initiated and ended at the instigation of a male

authority figure, and in the absence of negotiation with Mairi herself. In both these instances it seems that it is axiomatic for women to accept a marginal position.

Carron indicates that she is unsure of the validity of women preaching, but suggests that no women within the Free Church of Scotland would aspire to this in any case. This deflection from the issue of women's place within the church is a strategy oft employed when the question of women in ministry is raised (PORTER, 2004).

Carron's assertion that any woman who did have aspirations for ministry simply wouldn't be in the Free Church is a bold one and one which potentially strips any such women of belonging: *as if women are going to take over. It just won't happen. We would not be in the Free Church if we wanted to do that.*

What appears to be happening here is a process of adopting a rhetoric of equality and autonomy whilst simultaneously sustaining the existing gender divisions. As Connell noted in his study of teachers, concessions to equality made in theory, are qualified, and thus nullified in practice (CONNELL, 1985). In the church context, according to Carron, women could perhaps preach, but none would want to anyway. Similarly, isolated examples of women precenting are used by Jane to insist that there is no gendering of this role.

It is interesting to reflect on why the tendency towards schism and dissent historically characteristic of Scottish Presbyterianism (and in play as recently as 2000 in the Free Church) has failed to manifest itself in a mobilisation of women against their own marginal position. Where is what Parman refers to as the *schismogenic dynamic* (Parman in MACDONALD et al., 2004:179)? To what extent is it loyalty to the denomination (or to their men in the denomination) that results in the political quietism of women like Mairi? Or is that quietism part of a broader construction and performance of femininity?

Exercising Power

Self-abnegation leads also to the illegitimising of claims to rights and to the eschewing of power. Walkerdine argues that women are fearful of recognising power within themselves.

Women's success appears to present such a threat to masculine rationality, and to the bourgeois and patriarchal power which underpins it, that it is very dangerous for women to admit their own power (WALKERDINE, 1990:143).

In a sense, women feel that part of themselves which might be understood as powerful has been split off, almost as if it is not part of them but of someone else. If they achieve power, even in a relative sense, they feel dislocated. They feel the need to disassociate from their powerful selves. The women in the study are constructed through ideological discourses which encourage them to give power up: the processes of hegemony make this seem 'right' and inevitable to them. At the same time, some (particularly some Marxist) understandings of the processes of power within the institutions of education position the teacher as a powerful oppressor of powerless children (WALKERDINE, 1990).

Such dissonances were evident in Mairi's account of her distress following allegations that she had treated children harshly. This characterisation as one who failed to perform nurture was offered by her as the worst episode of her working life. Mairi's account exemplifies the tension that is at the centre of the Primary teacher's role, the tension between nurture and control (GRUMET, 1988), a tension which Connell has long argued is *more than an incompatibility between two practices. It is a tension about gender itself* (CONNELL, 1985:153). Indeed the inherent contradiction in discourses surrounding child-centred pedagogies and the motherhood model is in their denial of the power-over relationship which teachers inevitably need to manage 30 children:

Part of this fiction is the denial of power. Covert regulation becomes typified by the image of the bourgeois mother who nurtures, helps and understands. Schooling, therefore, becomes a space in which inequality is denied, where the fiction is perpetrated that equality can be produced by means of a new and better 'natural bond'... The child centred pedagogy at the heart of the primary school is a powerful fiction because it is a fiction of freedom, democracy, safety, nature (WALKERDINE, 1990:118).

The role which Mairi perceived she should have fulfilled, then, was not just one of nurture but one of gentleness and quietude. Her transgression disrupted both her performance of care and her performance of femininity. She had become Hook's caricature, *Mrs Blitzrieg*, the witch-like teacher (HOOK, 2004). *Angry women are hateful... qualities naturalised in men and pathologized in women* (WALKERDINE, 1990:153).

This section has offered an exploration of the dissonances and conflicts which women appeared to experience as a result of their discursive positioning in school and church. In the next section, I highlight the ways in which, despite the seeming limitations of their lived experience, women make sense of their lives in terms of agency and autonomy.

RESOLUTIONS

Despite the constraints of their discursive positionings as outlined above, the women in the study were not without agency in their social worlds. There is evidence in the data of ways in which participants offer narratives of negotiation and of mild resistance which allow them to find spaces of autonomy and self-actualisation in home, school and church. Further, the data suggest that women find fulfilment and personhood through relationships and in senses of belonging and that women engage in acts of self-exception to distance themselves from constructions which would characterise them as subjugated.

Resistances

In the narrations offered around Initial Teacher Education, there is a sense of it as a going through the motions, as a rite-of-passage expected of teachers, to which they submit unquestioningly despite its dubious value. They submit, as relatively powerless actors, to a system which offers little autonomy, often experienced as 'just like school'. While resistance within this context is limited, however, it is not entirely absent in the accounts. Mairi's walk-out in response to a tutor's attack on Highland working-class culture, and Jessie's challenge to the power-crazed Miss Dickson, stand out in stark relief against the relative silence and sense of resigned inevitability which characterises the other participants' tales of college life.

There is also evidence of some agency in the relationships of participants with more powerful others in school settings. Jessie held the most positive view of authority and those in authority, and yet seemed the most inclined towards resistance. She appears to understand her own resistance as part of her professionalism, rather than a symptom of un-professionalism, which seems to be the disabling fear of women like Margaret. As such, dissonances between ideal and practice, and the *alienation of self linked to the displacement of individual qualities* (BALL, 2003:222) are relatively absent in Jessie's account. Her sense of autonomy is made possible, perhaps, by her seemingly positive views of powerful others, as might be read into her high regard for Initial Teacher Education, policy-makers and education officials. *One does not*

think to emphasise autonomy when one's liberty or personal freedom does not seem constrained (BIKLEN, 1995:82).

The strongest stories of resistance were offered by Jane and Carron, whose situation in Learning Support seemed to imbue them with a particular set of professional knowledge which was not enjoyed by other participants, and which, in turn, afforded them power to make decisions around, for example, use of time and children's readiness for testing. This specialism, this holding of a privileged set of knowledges, perhaps enhances a teacher's sense of self-worth. It certainly allows teachers the privilege to pursue nurture without the conflicts which arise from group control. For Carron, her desire to nurture extended to those ostensibly in power over her thus disrupting the power relationship. Jessie seems also to enjoy this heightened sense of self-worth, which inclines teachers towards claiming and practising autonomy in their work in more open and less covert ways. For her, this self-worth appears to be achieved in part through education. The resistances offered by Carron, Jane and Jessie might be understood, then, as simultaneously produced by and producing a sense of self-worth.

Distances

It seemed from the data that the very distance which women construct between themselves and policy or policy-makers may itself allow teachers to create and maintain spaces of autonomy. All participants in the study reported examples of doing their own thing within the classroom in clandestine ways, but without overt resistance to policies and practices with which they disagreed. In the struggle between silence and voice (GITLIN et al., 1992), it may be that silence allows for some personal autonomy. To be uninvolved in the processes of policy-making at both macro and micro levels, is, for some, to be un-invested in the policies which emerge, and thus to owe them mere lip-service rather than genuine engagement.

The situation of Primary teachers within the private space of the classroom also offers paradoxical possibilities. On the one hand it creates isolation, and situates women in places from which their voices cannot be heard: domestic spaces in which

teachers perform their role as nurturers and facilitators (STEEDMAN, 1985, TAMBOUKOU, 2000). On the other hand, that very isolation seems to afford spaces of autonomy, and of protection from surveillance and control. The clandestine practices which teachers covertly adopted, of doing things their own way despite directions to the contrary, were facilitated by the closed doors of their classrooms. This is one explanation for the fact that the presence of a promoted member of staff in her classroom cupboard caused Margaret such angst. The symbolic holder of a set of knowledges from which she was excluded was penetrating, violating, the private space of her classroom, and in so doing threatening to expose her transgressive practices and to impose alternative ones. There is evidence too of insularity providing protected spaces - safe, feminine spaces - guarded against a perceived threatening 'masculine' agenda for change. Constructions of the powerful as lacking relevant pedagogical knowledges, particularly knowledges of the Early Years, were used by both Katherine and Margaret. Some also maintain the spaces in which they have created comfort by covert resistance to change, as in Katherine's accepting the position of Senior Teacher to save her school environment from the intrusion of a more powerful other. Margaret's narrative even goes so far as to suggest that she finds space and autonomy by taking refuge in the very world of childhood which was so oppressive and restricting for Steedman (STEEDMAN, 1985).

Relationships

In similar ways, some of the women in the study also found fulfilment and self-efficacy in their relationships with un-promoted colleagues. This came across very strongly in Katherine's account and in Mairi's account, and there were shades of it also in Margaret's. Again, Katherine's taking the Senior Teaching role could be seen as an act of sisterhood. It seemed that the very relational warmth which they enjoyed as a small group of women teachers depended for its existence and survival on the distance it created from those in power. While we must guard against conceptualising women teachers as a homogenous group, it seems possible that *femininity offers a possible procedure for subverting the marginalising mechanisms of power, thereby breaking it up* (BEASLEY, 1999). Similarly, Mairi had gathered

round her a close social group of colleagues with a shared rhetoric of nostalgia and 'othering' of promoted colleagues. This fulfilment from camaraderie in the workplace was bought at the expense of any pretension to promotion, or any close relationship with those who were in promoted positions. In contrast, in the accounts of Jane and Carron who enjoyed relative autonomy in their Learning Support roles, and who narrated more equal and less deferential relationships with promoted colleagues, this sense of close camaraderie seemed relatively absent. Indeed, there is a sense of social isolation, particularly in Jane's and Jessie's narratives. It is as if *autonomy brings freedom, but it also separates or distances individuals from caring, needy or dependent relationships with others*. (BIKLEN, 1995:94). This resonates with my own previous study of Primary teachers:

holding a position of authority was seen by some teachers as proscribing social intimacy between head teachers and teaching staff. The intricacies of staff/power relationships were described by one teacher thus: I don't think promoted staff can be the boss, telling you what to do and your pal. You have to be up there by yourself and that's your choice. (MACDONALD, 2004:419).

For Jessie in particular, one wonders whether the absence of relationship signifies a kind of complicity with power regimes, despite (or perhaps connected to) the measure of autonomy she seems to enjoy and the measure of resistance she offers. Is she falling into the trap of what Ball describes as the 'regulative ensemble', in which

teachers are represented and encouraged to think of themselves as individuals who calculate about themselves, 'add value' to themselves, improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live in an existence of calculation (BALL, 2003:217)?

Yet her narrative, unlike the culture described by Ball, seems to be one of commitment and service, one which consciously prioritises values over value.

For some women a sense of relationship with the divine may be what ultimately helps them make sense of their positioning within Evangelical churches. *Through first submitting to God, women find freedom from a sense of victimization and an increased sense of personal agency and responsibility* (GALLAGHER, 2004:453).

This is seen, perhaps, in Mairi's account of her struggle to accommodate the views of her parents-in-law in her family life, having married into the Free Church: a struggle which was resolved in an understanding that her God-ward relationship was of

ultimate importance. In this way, Mairi appears to seek justification for her life through her relationship with God.

In these relationships, the other's act of transcendence are the means for the woman's attainment of freedom through the alienation of herself in the other. These efforts however are always insufficient, for they necessitate a reduction of subjectivity to the sphere of immanence and preclude woman's individual responsibility to create meaningful projects in the world (POWELL, 2006:85).

Further, it is suggested that women in these communities regard the primacy and sanctity of motherhood and domesticity in ways that devalue the roles that they might otherwise fulfil. Thus, even though they may be gifted as outstanding speakers or administrators, they choose to eschew such roles in favour of their God-ordained ones (PEVEY et al., 1996). Yet, one might argue that the very processes which encourage women to conceptualise their roles in this way (as seemingly right and fitting, but simultaneously marginalising and limiting) are typical of hegemonic processes of gender and power.

Pevey *et al* argue that a woman might derive a sense of power from being in relationship with a masculine God (PEVEY et al., 1996). The evangelical women in the study continuously (and seemingly unselfconsciously) utilised a male pronoun when referring to God. Interestingly, the other three women used no direct pronoun for God at all. Margaret refers, in passing, to issues of constructing God as Father and the negative impact this might have on children who didn't have a positive relationship with their own father, but this was to narrate the input of another, rather than to highlight something that was of concern to herself. Apart from this, no awareness of, or concern with, the supposed maleness of deity was evident. But allegiance to such a male God, one whom she perceives to be in power over all those to whom she is subordinated in her various social worlds of home, school and church, offers its own sense of agency.

As the primary bearers of religious tradition within the household, conservative Protestant women may gain power by reminding their husbands and children of the directives of a powerful masculine God...These women may have a stake in preserving an exclusively masculine God in a culture that devalues the feminine (PEVEY et al., 1996:189).

Yet to the extent to which women might thus find male imagery for God empowering, it is at the expense of any re-conceptualisation or transformation of the overall subordination of the feminine.

Belonging

Sharon MacDonald commented that Presbyterians often spoke of their church adherence in a kinship idiom (MACDONALD, 1997). For Mairi, spaces of autonomy and personhood are to be found within her own congregation, which she presents as enjoying a cohesive and enduring community life, and through which she experiences a powerful sense of belonging. This sense of kinship and familial belonging endures throughout the life-course, and is traced back to previous generations by Mairi and Carron. Conversely, its absence is keenly felt by Jane.

It should be understood that both Mairi and Carron are, in some senses, privileged as women within their church communities. Carron is a minister's daughter and a minister's wife and Mairi the wife of an elder whose brothers are both ministers. Whilst this belonging by virtue of their status as wives is, of course, problematic, both seem to experience an authentic sense of belonging. Mairi's upbringing in a rural Presbyterian community and her subsequent membership of an Evangelical Presbyterian community in the Kirk, seem to have laid the foundations for authentic inclusion, despite her upbringing outwith the Free Church.

For Jane, there appears to be a striving to belong in the face of her conscious identity as an 'outsider' in terms of cultural, geographical and familial belonging. She appears to create space for herself by defending the *status quo* within the Free Church:

women remain in Christian church life... precisely because of the set roles for women, not in spite of them. Such women find the clarity empowering... may appear to remain and further invest themselves precisely because of a sense of belonging (JULE, 2008:73).

Through emphasising the transcendence of faith over culture, and over all else, she legitimises her own membership. In so doing, she calls into question the legitimacy

of group membership, such as my own, which depends on such markers of belonging.

For Katherine, we see neither a deep sense of belonging, nor a striving to belong to the religious community. But even in her narrative, there is an awareness of the markers of belonging, and of the nuanced meanings attached to attendance at worship in different communities of religion. There is something in her account of the angst she experienced over whether to attend the Free Church with her mother, of Katherine's awareness of the conspicuousness of one who has 'fallen away' attending worship within this faith community (PARMAN, 2005), an awareness which itself, ironically, stems from her own past membership and shared understandings. It is as if she is acknowledging that she can no longer legitimise a right to belong to this community, that her narrative is not one she can use to claim group membership (LINDE, 1993). Yet her insider knowledge of this culture sensitises her to the particular cultural readings which would accompany her attendance at worship (assumptions of 'conversion', a returning to the fold), the further expectations that would arise in terms of continued attendance, and the possible intrusion in terms of pastoral surveillance and spiritual exposure. The Church of Scotland, in contrast, offers a relatively safe environment in which to practise faith in a more nominal and anonymous way. Its cultural positioning outwith Evangelicalism means that attendance at worship there carries a different set of meanings: meanings which would not fuel her mother's hopes for her 'conversion'. And yet Katherine is faced with the problem of preserving a sense of self as a woman of some (if somewhat problematic) faith through tenuous connection to two faith communities without tangible membership of either.

Self Exception

Within church cultures too, participants created spaces in which they found meaning and fulfilment, and in which they could make sense of their seeming marginalisation. While Mairi and Carron acknowledge, up to a point, the limitations for them as women within the church, they both endeavour to present their own personal position in a positive light. Carron does so by highlighting her alternative experience in the

church in South Africa, and by emphasising the relatively egalitarian nature of her own new-town congregation. Similarly, Mairi regards her own congregation as relatively free from cultures and practices which limit women. In fact, she regards it as almost pioneering in this respect, despite the fact that it adheres to the formal restrictions on women in office. She describes the fulfilment which she has enjoyed in a life-time's work with children in church settings. In a strategy which Pevey *et al* describe as *systematic self-exception* (PEVEY et al., 1996:189), they choose to relate their stories in terms of agency, emphasising the ways in which they are permitted to participate rather than those in which they are not. In a sense this evidences gender as a contested cultural construct within this community. While distinctive, patriarchal strands of Evangelical discourse are undoubtedly in play, they exist alongside counter-hegemonic discourses and a rhetoric of egalitarianism. There is a question here, too, about the relationship between attitudes to gender and the practices of gender within the lives of these women (BARTKOWSKI, 1997). Mairi and Carron appear to hold to relatively egalitarian views of the woman's role while at the same time performing traditional roles in their own homes and churches.

It seemed to be the consensus among the three members of the Free Church that women were content with the *status quo*, and that there was no real aspiration for change. The stories of the limited inclusion of women in the practices of public prayer and precenting were offered as frustrating, but qualified by the insistence that women don't really want increased participation in any case. Mairi and Carron, then, inhabit a stance on the place of women in the church which is relatively egalitarian, although the practices in and through which they experience and practise faith are not. And there are limits to their egalitarianism, the boundaries of which are carefully policed by them. Some mild stories of resistance are also in evidence, in which women find space to be. But these always stop short of dissent or schism.

Women also find spaces to 'be' in the paradox through which Evangelical women understand their subordinate position to men in terms, not of their own weakness, but rather the weaknesses and moral short-comings of men (GALLAGHER, 2003). Carron does not use her perception that men do certain things in the church badly to

argue for an increased involvement of women in the formal structure of the church. Her suggestion, rather, seems to be that men leave gaps which women may fill, for example, by being involved in counselling situations. Men may do things badly in the formal structures, and women are there, not to replace them, but to clean up after them. *Who will stand in the gap?* (Ezekiel 22:30 AV). Women will. It is empowerment of sorts.

In both social worlds it appears that women struggle *with conflicts between desires for social equality and fears of how such equality might disrupt their personal lives* (CAMMACK and KALMBACH PHILLIPS, 2002:129). Even where there is some engagement with notions of resistance, and some recognition of discourses of patriarchy, these stop short of commitment to self re-invention. They are not transformative. Their ability to negotiate and manoeuvre within the constraints in ways which afford some autonomy and self-actualisation, does not negate the very real limitations of their cultural positioning.

Yet the very investment in gendered religious ideologies, and in classroom spaces rendered autonomous by their very marginalisation, is itself a way of resisting, of being. The women are not without agency in the power of the language which seems to constitute them. Like the women in Cammack and Philip's study, the participants are *under the disciplinary power of discourse* (and yet) *there is also the sense that they may choose these discourses to tell the story of their lives as a way to provide stability and continuity to their self-narratives* (CAMMACK and KALMBACH PHILLIPS, 2002:130).

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

During the years over which I have been working on this study, I have frequently been asked, in social situations, ‘So what are you finding?’ I have never known what to say. I have tended to offer something vague and non-committal about the qualitative nature of the endeavour not lending itself easily to the production of ‘findings’ in the conventional sense: a response which was genuine, but nonetheless unsatisfactory, both for my interlocutor, and for myself. And even now, tangible conclusions seem elusive. This is due in part to the complexity of the social worlds which the study attempts to explore. It is due also to the diversity of the lived experience explored, and the individuality of participants’ negotiations of their place in these social worlds. It reflects, in addition, the tentative nature of the chosen methodology and research process, and the inevitable caution which such an approach suggests in terms of claims to ‘truth’ or certainty. On the other hand, the complexity and nuances of my approach suggests ways of thinking and even of being that are valuable and valid. Because the chosen methodology involves research on and with people, the data need to be read and interpreted with a sympathetic understanding which allows for a suggestive construction of meaning. The value of this study, overall, is not that it presents ‘truth’ or ‘certainty’, but that it stimulates, and validates, the following reflections on the key themes.

Key Themes

The participants constructed faith as central to their lives as women and as teachers. That centrality was located specifically in their orientation towards nurture and care, which they performed both at school and at home, and constructed as Christian service. Faith was not defined, primarily, as a repertoire of beliefs or constructed in terms of a collection of texts (DITTMER, 2007). Rather it seemed to be conceptualised in terms of belonging and of commitment. For Evangelical women this was constructed as a personal relationship with the divine, involving prayer and

responsibility to God, while for women from mainstream churches it tended to be narrated more in terms of adherence to a set of moral values. Tensions arose between various constructions of faith as 'private', as cultural and as 'real' and the women deployed various strategies to negotiate positions in which they felt comfortable, and to demark boundaries which served to protect and legitimise the system of meanings through which their own faith tradition was produced.

In each area of their lived experience, participants drew on discourses that constructed the roles which they played as 'natural' for them as women. These constructions, built around concepts of motherhood, child-centred pedagogy, and the ideology of separate spheres, seemed to draw on essentialised understandings of gender that rendered inevitable and unchallengeable their locations in spaces of relative powerlessness and invisibility. The discursive practices at play led women to produce themselves, and their bodies, in particular ways: ways encoded as 'woman' and as 'Christian woman'. Thus women tended to minimise their bodily visibility in both school and church, as if the very materiality of their bodies was problematic, transgressive. Roles through which men produced themselves as visible and legitimate, were performed by women behind the scenes. Further, women's bodies were inscribed with a 'naturalness' which seemed to suit them to nurture. In some Evangelical settings, discursive practices suggested that women ought to produce their bodies as evidence of moral rectitude, eschewing make up or 'immodest' apparel.

These productions, in turn, led to certain constraints and limitations for women. These included the de-legitimising of paid work, an eschewing of academic aspiration, and a distancing from active participation in the decision-making apparatuses of church and school. Further, they led women to construct as illegitimate any investment in the self, or any inclination to seek power or 'place' (such as might be offered in and through feminism). Thus silence and invisibility are produced as normative for women.

Yet, despite these constructions of Christian womanhood, the women in the study took up a range of strategies for negotiating 'spaces to be': spaces of meaningful participation and self-actualisation. The very distance constructed between their role and those of powerful others allowed for closeted spaces in which to pursue practices beyond and beneath surveillance. Relationships with equally powerless others, often constructed with almost familial closeness, brought self-actualisation and fulfilment not available to those who compete for place. Characterisations of marginalisation as both 'natural' and 'chosen', and the adoption of strategies of *systematic self-exception* (PEVEY et al., 1996:189) allowed women to narrate their lived experience in terms of agency rather than of oppression. Further, Evangelical Christian women called on their very relationship with God (albeit a God constructed as male) to disrupt the construction of themselves as disempowered in relation to men.

The theoretical framework offered at the beginning of this thesis has proved useful in conceptualising the processes through which women understand, and perpetuate, their own marginalisation. The notion of ideological power suggested by Gramsci's theory of hegemony does seem to account for the processes through which the women appear to give their consent to subordination. They see the roles ascribed to them as 'natural' and 'common-sense'. Further, there are reciprocities to be enjoyed by the women as a result of colluding in these ways – most notably those of belonging and of the perpetuity of their cultures and lifestyles. Their consent to the domination of more powerful others is understood as freely given, and this affords women liberty to make sense of their lives in terms of personal autonomy rather than in terms of powerlessness. An understanding of the processes of power in hegemonic terms also accommodates the continued contestations and resistances which were apparent in the narratives. The combination of this approach with notions of the socially constructed body, a body on which cultural meanings are continuously inscribed, facilitated understandings of the relations of gender and power as perpetually in process. The women were seen to engage repeatedly in acts which were culturally associated with bodies encoded 'woman', and to perform gender in ways which could be understood as avoidance of that Butlerian *vertigo of terror* which might arise were they to disrupt the hegemonic norms of place. Thus

an understanding of gender as a relational process produced through the complex interrelation of bodies and the social was useful in unpacking the narratives and suggesting solutions to the central conundrum.

The methodological approach facilitated an understanding of the participant's subjectivity as nonunitary (BLOOM, 1995). Rather than seeking to discover *an essence at the heart of the individual which is unique, fixed and coherent and makes her what she is* (Weedon in BLOOM, 1995:100), it allowed for a construction of identities as polysemic and ambiguous, and for the possibility of changes in the participant's subjectivity over time and place. Conceptualisations of the subject as nonunitary, in turn, facilitated the exploration of multiple and contradictory discourses, and highlighted the ways in which women negotiated personas which were at once resistant and deferential.

My search for, and construction of, meaning through this study, therefore, has led me to suggest various relationships between Primary teaching as work, Christian faith, and the production of gendered identities in the lives of Scottish women. While a multiplicity of meanings has been suggested, the main unifying theme to emerge from this study is surely the concept of self-sacrifice. A theme central and essential to the very proposition of Christianity, it appeared to underpin the production of self for my respondents in home, school and church. It seemed that the discourses of self-sacrifice adopted in these varied social worlds coalesced in the lives of the women participants. The general theme of self-sacrifice in Christianity is taken up in discourse in such a way that it applies specifically, and punitively, to women, particularly within Evangelical settings. The study suggests that ideologies of the God-ordained 'naturalness' of womanhood operate to produce women who serve, who nurture, and who *present their bodies a living sacrifice* (Romans 12: 1 AV) not in the sense implied by the Apostle, but rather in ways which comply with hegemonic understandings of power and Butlerian notions of embodiment. Further, the pedagogical ideals privileged by the women in the study – those of child-centredness – call women teachers to self-abnegation and invisibility. These productions are then unified through notions of work as both Christian calling and

self-sacrifice: notions which seem to accord with Weber's critique of the ethic of Protestantism and its relationship to paid work.

I return, then, to the central problem with which I began. Why do women collude and acquiesce in their own seeming marginalisation and silencing in the social worlds of school and church? In her ethnographic work on a Scottish Presbyterian community, Parman suggested that, for parishioners, religious conversion was a means of participation in a Celtic heritage: a strategy necessary for the protection and continuity of a culture (PARMAN, 2005). Although this does not particularly accord with my participants' accounts of religious adherence, it does raise the question to what extent they understood collusion in their own marginality as necessary for the continuity of the cultures to which they belong? Perhaps the women understand collusion in their own marginality as the only way in which to have meaningful participation in these cultures. It seems, perhaps, that notions of self-sacrifice, both conscious and sub-conscious, allow them to do this. They provide for women in the study a framework which helps them accept and make sense of lives in which, from the outward appearance, they are both silenced and marginalised. By understanding their positions as choices stemming from their own recognition of their 'natural' condition as women, they construct themselves as agentic in these processes rather than subordinated by them. And they do so in varied and nuanced ways, each drawing on areas in which they as individuals find some fulfilment, some space to 'be', each finding her own avenue of resolution. *Resistance is not just struggle against the oppression of a static power... Rather, relations of power and resistance are continually reproduced, in continual struggle and constantly shifting* (WALKERDINE, 1990:4). So, what looks like marginality to the outsider, is negotiated by the women as willing and purposeful. Thus, they create what is for them *a meaningful present* (PARMAN, 2005:175).

Further Research

It is hoped that this thesis addresses some of the gaps in the existing literature in the areas of both Scottish religion and teachers' lives. I have endeavoured to point

towards faith as a key shaper of the gendered identities of some Scottish women teachers. In so doing, I highlight the desirability of a re-conceptualisation of the inter-connection between Protestant religion and Primary Schooling in contemporary Scotland. I have suggested that conceptualisations of Primary teaching as work are infused, for the subjects, with the ideologies of Christian religion and that such ideologies operate in gendered ways to maintain hegemonic relations of power within the institutions of church and school. Yet so much more could be done to explore these interrelationships. Although I do not offer conventional recommendations for further research, certain avenues for exploration do suggest themselves.

One of the features of this project was the way in which it evolved from a study of the production of identities of Scottish women teachers in Primary settings to a study which focussed on women in Scottish Presbyterianism. One disadvantage of this evolutionary process was that the data produced did not offer direct evidence on some very pertinent issues, as the research process – permissions, interview themes – had not fully anticipated what some of the issues would be. For example, although some evidence was suggestive of the adoption of a submissive persona within marriage on the part of the women in the study, participants were not asked directly for their views on this doctrine or their experiences of its outworking in practice. Clearly, there is further work to be done in order to address such a question more directly.

This study also highlights the possibilities which open up when research begins to examine the lived experience of women from within the women's own points of reference, in communities which seem to operate oppressive cultural practices. By acknowledging faith as an integral component of the subject's world, and allowing for the authenticity and integrity of her faith position, it attempts to open up spaces in which to pursue an understanding of the particular ways in which struggles between structure and agency are negotiated by religious women in educational settings. There is considerable scope for further work on the lived experience of women in Scottish Presbyterianism. With the exception of the work of Lesley Orr (Orr

MACDONALD, 2000a, ORR, 2003), there is virtually no published academic work which addresses this area directly, although a few unpublished theses at both Masters and Doctoral level do exist, and other ethnographic works of note deal with the area in passing (MACDONALD, 1997, PARMAN, 2005). Although I have attempted to bring to bear on the Scottish Presbyterian context some of the growing literature on women in Evangelicalism, I have made only a very limited beginning. Much of this literature comes from very different cultural settings, particularly North American Evangelicalism; and I have not adequately accounted for the cultural specificities of the bulk of this literature (those of 'right-wing' North American Evangelicalism) and the resulting limitations of its application in the contrasting cultural setting that is Scottish Presbyterianism.

A further element of interest with which this study has not dealt is social class. One of the phenomena of the Conservative Presbyterian churches in Scotland has been their propensity towards upward mobility. Traditionally, their members and adherents were drawn from the working classes, and class was no impediment to office, as gender was. Further, their emphasis on education for all afforded their adherents the tools needed to pursue more lucrative and more comfortable employment than their parents. For example, my own grandfather was born and brought up on a highland croft, one of ten children, in what would now be regarded as abject poverty. He did well at school and became a white-collar worker, and a very literate man despite the limitations of his formal education. His respect for learning encouraged his son, my father, to study at university, which he did up to PhD level. As a direct result, we enjoyed a standard of living, and social expectations, which would have been inconceivable for my grandfather's family only two generations earlier. The trajectories of the women in the study were not dissimilar. The fluid nature of class and the specificities of its production in and through the discourses of religion in Scotland, therefore, merit examination.

Some Final Reflections

I set out to explore why it was that Scottish Presbyterian women did not seem to take up power in school and church: why they seemed content with relative powerlessness. I considered myself to be more powerful than they because of my own inclination to question, to resist and to speak out. But I wonder now whether this is so. Their adoption and performance of a marginal place within the hegemonic hierarchies seemed to open up powerful possibilities – those of belonging and of group membership: those ultimately of legitimacy. In other words, the reciprocities they enjoy as a result of complicity afford them, perhaps, more power than enjoyed by those like myself who resist, but do not overcome, our discursive position.

This notion of legitimacy, and of its lack, may be key to my own inability to give a meaningful account of my research to casual but interested enquirers, especially, perhaps, to those for whom it should have most relevance and meaning: to teachers and to women of faith. An endeavour of this nature is transgressive, that is, it creates meanings which are not available, and therefore not recognisable, to those who are bounded by the discursive practices described in this thesis; and by engaging in it I am failing to produce myself as selfless, self-sacrificial, child-orientated, and silent, in the ways which would lend me legitimacy. This brings me full-circle to my own positionality as outlined in the opening chapters: my own conscious use of Christian identity as ‘standpoint’, and the extent to which this ‘worked’ in the study. This approach allowed me to relate to my respondents as those who shared much of my own lived experience, rather than as the cultural ‘other’ which the secular researcher might have regarded them. It allowed me, up to a point, to engage with ideas of faith from within a shared set of understandings and to produce solutions from within the respondents’ own terms of reference. But ultimately, much of what I have produced, I suspect, they would not recognise. Some of the explanations I offer disrupt what they hold to be true. Some of the linguistic strategies I employ (for example in my production of biblical texts as problematic) would cause offence. Thus my engagement in this work, as an ‘insider’, brings into question my legitimacy as an ‘insider’.

At the conclusion of the study, there are a number of caveats to be uttered. First, I acknowledge, as I hope has been clear throughout, the inevitability that I will have imported into the research-processes my own affections and irritations, in short, my own agenda, and that not altogether inadvertently. The work is offered in the full awareness that, just as it sparked and spawned my original interests, my own positionality and lived experience have coloured and informed my analysis. To that extent, this is not a work of discovery but of recovery (GRUMET, 1988:191).

A further caveat is this. The stories told in this work, with the exception of my own, might lead one to believe that there are no feminist voices in these social settings. There is a danger that the absence of feminist awareness or endeavour in these stories of church and school, allied to the fact that I explore these, and only these, stories, will have the effect of marginalising the counter-hegemonic voices of feminists in these settings. This may compound the problems of patriarchy and marginalisation. If, in the event, submissive women are in some senses more powerful or empowered in these settings than are feminist women (in ways in which I have explored), feminist women experience a particular kind of silencing.

Then, as is often the case for ethnographic researchers, I struggle with concerns about betrayal. In this work, that concern manifests itself at many levels. There is the worry common to all involved in narrative research concerning misrepresentation and misuse of stories which are precious to the participants and costly to tell. I hope I have not done so, but the concern lingers. There are more personal concerns too, including that of betrayal of parents and family, of the culture in which I was nurtured, and perhaps even of The Faith itself. I beg forbearance, and ask that my engagement in this work be read more as a deep emotional investment in this world than as a rejection of it.

I also worry that, to the extent to which I have drawn on sources from outwith Presbyterianism, I may inadvertently have been guilty of deploying the organising discourses of the culture's critics. MacDonald has commented that previous texts on Scottish Evangelicalism have made

too little attempt to understand Presbyterianism from inside its own terms of reference. Surely anthropology, he argues, can do more with religious experience than reducing it to 'a method of resolving the contradictions of an anomalous life' (PARMAN, 2005:172); or seeing it in functionalist terms as a means of 'maintaining social control' (PARMAN, 2005:152) (MACDONALD et al., 2004:163).

He calls for *a disciplined subjectivity that can make anthropological sense of religion in ways that do not implicitly refuse the terms of its expression* (MACDONALD et al., 2004:164). This, I set out to do, but I fear I have been only marginally successful in my endeavour. To Evangelical Presbyterians, what matters is to make theological, not anthropological, sense of their culture, and that perspective must be respected.

There is a danger too, even for one positioned as an 'insider', to assume that Evangelical Presbyterians are monolithic in their support of patriarchal theologies, and thus to overlook the nuances, contradictions and contestations present within the narratives (BARTKOWSKI, 1997). The narratives make clear that it is neither accurate nor helpful simply to conflate the theologically conservative religious convictions of a culture with oppressed and limited womanhood. The 'reality' is more complex than this. Clearly, the women are neither weak and powerless, nor are they one-dimensional brainwashed dupes (PEVEY et al., 1996). Yes, they do practice conformity. But they do so as knowledgeable and active agents who put considerable energy into negotiating (and sometimes resisting) the social and structural constraints imposed upon them, experiencing, as they do, *ambivalence, contradictions and complexities in their religious beliefs* (PEVEY et al., 1996:175). And yet, I remain doubtful that a Christian identity which understands self-denial to be its defining feature can support a full authentic personhood for women, or progress effectively towards it, given the structural inequalities in school and in church.

There is a sense in which this thesis has evolved from my own struggle with the problematic relationship between women and Christianity, a struggle which remains unresolved. It would be heartening to think that a study such as this might engage those whose culture it explores. In research within such a small, insular and close-

knit cultural group, there are clear issues of anonymity, which must, for the present at least, necessarily limit the availability of this work in its current form, but it is hoped that papers will ensue which will highlight the emerging themes while protecting the identities of participants. However, experience suggests that church leaders are as disinclined to acknowledge that faith practices owe something to sociological processes as the church's critics are to acknowledge that faith may be better (or differently) understood from within its own terms of reference.

But the journey has not been wholly discouraging. I have come to recognise in the animated narration and deep sincerity of my participants' stories that

those who are disadvantaged by one set of oppressions may, by the same positioning, be advantaged through others... Examining women's lives in terms of such a "matrix of domination" can restore agency and rationality to our understanding of women's participation in patriarchal institutions, without deflecting attention away from the dynamics of power that perpetuate gender inequality (PEVEY et al., 1996:191).

We end with one certainty: that lives are not simple (STANLEY, 1992:253).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – INITIAL LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Charteris Land
Moray House School of Education
Holyrood Road
EDINBURGH
EH8 8AQ

Telephone: 0131 651 6430

9 March 2006

Dear Colleague

SCOTTISH WOMEN TEACHERS: ISSUES OF GENDER, NATION AND IDENTITY

I am writing to ask you to participate in a research project which I am undertaking as part of a PhD program at the University of Edinburgh. This is a qualitative study into Scottish women as primary teachers and would involve you in a few hours of informal, conversational interviews with myself.

My area of interest

Broadly, I am interested in the primary teacher's identity and how that is formed and adapted over time. I am particularly interested in the ways in which our teacher-identity is bound up with both our gender and our national identities. What does it mean to be a Scottish woman primary teacher? How do we understand ourselves?

How my interest in this arose

My interest arises directly from my own experience of being a primary teacher in Scotland. I want to reflect on the ways in which teaching can fulfil and yet frustrate and the ways in which schools as workplaces can be simultaneously infuriating for us as professionals and yet deeply bonding for us as women. I detect a weariness with the pace and nature of educational change and yet a disinclination to resist such change or to become proactive in shaping educational initiatives. And I wonder what it is about us as teachers, as women, and as Scottish women, that makes this so.

What I want to talk to you about

In exploring these issues, I think it is important to recognise that our lives are not compartmentalised but that our wider life-experiences have a bearing on our professional lives and vice versa. For that reason, I would not wish our discussion to be limited to

life-in-school but would want to situate that within the wider context of who we are as people. Should you agree to participate, I will send you a detailed list of discussion points prior to our meeting. However, the following topic-headings give an indication of the sort of issues in which I am interested:

- Priorities in our lives and in our work as teachers
- Frustrations in our lives, and in our work as teachers
- Work/life balance - areas of harmony or of tension between our identities as teachers and other identities we hold
- Being women – at home, at school and in wider society
- Feminism – our experiences and perceptions of the women's movement
- Scotland, 'Scottishness' and what it means to be a Scottish woman

Interviews will be very conversational and interactive in nature, providing an opportunity for us to share our experiences of being Scottish primary teachers, and of being women in Scotland.

What the research process would involve for you

If you agree to participate the procedure would be as follows:

- You would be asked to please sign the enclosed permission slip and return it to me in the envelope provided.
- I would contact you and arrange an initial meeting at a time and location convenient for you. (If you live outwith Edinburgh, we could meet in your home or in a hotel/café near to you. If you are based in Edinburgh there are the additional options of my own home or the University.)
- Prior to our meeting I would send you a detailed list of discussion points.
- When we meet I would, with your permission, record the interview so that I have an accurate record of what was said. The interview would be very informal – ideally over coffee – and would last up to one and a half hours.
- I would transcribe the interview and send you a copy. I would reflect on what you have said and note interesting points which I want to pursue or clarify with you, and send you an indication of what these are. I would then arrange another interview similar to the first. This cycle might, if you agreed, be repeated three or four times.
- In writing up my thesis, (and in any papers for publication arising from this work) I would ensure your anonymity by changing all names and place-names or other details by which you may be identifiable. I would share the written narratives with you and would welcome your feedback.

What do you get out of it?

I know that your time is limited and precious. Clearly, by agreeing to participate in this study you will be doing me a huge favour. However, participants in this kind of life-narrative research often describe the experience very positively, emphasising the rare opportunity it offers for them to consider their life-work experiences, and to make sense of busy, demanding lives. Reflecting on our experiences as teachers, and on our beliefs and values as women, can heighten our self-knowledge and bring fresh understandings of how we shape, and are shaped by, the world in which we live. I look forward to hearing from you

Ann MacDonald

Agreement & Permission Statement

I agree to participate in **SCOTTISH WOMEN TEACHERS: ISSUES OF GENDER, NATION AND IDENTITY.**

I understand that interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed and that transcripts will be available only to the interviewer and interviewee.

I understand that data arising from this project will be used in the interviewer's PhD thesis, and possibly also in journal publications in her name. I will be given the opportunity to comment on any papers prior to publication.

I understand that, in the thesis and other publications, names, place-names and other identifiable details will be changed and every effort will be made to ensure my anonymity.

I am free to withdraw my participation in the project at any time, and reserve the right to withdraw permission to use data arising from interviews.

Signature of Interviewee _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 2 – SECOND LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Charteris Land
Moray House School of Education
Holyrood Road
EDINBURGH
EH8 8AQ

Telephone: 0131 651 6430

12 April 2006

Dear

SCOTTISH WOMEN TEACHERS: ISSUES OF GENDER, NATION AND IDENTITY

Many thanks for returning your permission slip and for your agreement to participate in the above research project despite the many other demands on your time. I do appreciate it and very much look forward to working with you.

I will be in touch shortly to negotiate with you a suitable time and place to meet and to give you some discussion pointers to mull over. The simplest mode of communication for me is email, and so if you have frequent access to email, can I ask you to email me on ann.macdonald@education.ed.ac.uk to give me your email address. If I don't receive an email from you I will assume that this mode of communication is not convenient for you and I will be in touch by post or telephone.

Look forward to meeting up soon

Cheers

APPENDIX 3 – INITIAL INTERVIEW DEBRIEF

Scottish Women Teachers – Initial Interview

In this first interview, I would like us to talk in fairly general terms about your lives as teachers, beginning with the circumstances which led to your becoming a primary teacher. For most of us, this ‘choice’ dates back to our teenage years and may have been influenced by multiple factors including parental expectation, sibling’s choices, peer influences, school attainment, and many other social and domestic considerations. You may wish to consider, for example, in what ways your upbringing affected your career choice.

It would also be interesting to glean any recollections of your experiences of initial teacher education. Where did you train and why, and what are your perceptions of your training. Did it change you? How did it mould your perceptions of what teaching is?

I will ask you to reflect on your life as a teacher, and on what the consequences of your career choice have been for your life. In what ways has it been fulfilling or frustrating? In what ways have the experiences of being a primary teacher changed with the passing years. Perhaps you experienced teaching in different ways at different times, because of changes in your own life? If so, it would be good if you can describe some of the good times and some of the not-so-good. How has it impacted on your family life, and your social life? Do you have regrets? Would your life choices be the same if you could turn back the clock?

I’m also interested in your views on religion and its place in schooling.

Finally, I would like to consider issues surrounding the feminisation of the profession. For example, if you are a mother, how does caring for children in the classroom compare to caring for them at home? What do you regard as ‘issues’ when it comes to teaching girls and boys? What have been your experiences of working with colleagues as women and men?

Please note that these are intended as very general discussion pointers rather than an interview schedule. My research is very explorative in nature. I don’t have a hypothesis, but rather I am looking for an overall picture of your lives and identities as women teachers. So please feel free to suggest other topics, or tell other stories.

Thanks again for agreeing to participate. Looking forward to working with you.

Ann
June 2007

APPENDIX 4 - SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT ONE

DS330006 [REDACTED] 2

- INT ...if you don't mind. I don't know, did I ever send you, that's working, did I ever send you a transcript of the first interview? I think I maybe did.
- RES I don't think so.
- INT Did I not?
- RES I don't think so. But it doesn't...
- INT I thought I maybe had 'way back when I first tried to, to make the second interview. But anyway the stuff we sort of spoke about in the first interview, you know, is very much about your experience at school. And you certainly, you came across as somebody who had a very very strong sense of vocation to teaching. Would you say that's right?
- RES I suppose, I suppose so. I really enjoyed working with the children.
- INT Aha.
- RES I did like that. Although as time went on and there was more and more people working it became more of a chore.
- INT Yeah yeah.
- RES The classroom aspect of it, yes I did enjoy very much.
- INT Aha aha. You came across, to me you came across both as having this very strong sense of vocation in the sense that this is, you know, what you should have done and no sense of you could have done, you wish you'd done anything else. But also at the same time a sense that, you know, a sense of the burden of the work. Do you think that's something to do with perhaps, you know, just growing older in teaching that it becomes a bit more...kind of wearing you down a bit?
- RES I won't say, I don't remember ever feeling it a particular burden. I got very tired and latterly I got very frustrated with head teachers who seemed to have different standards from the standards that I had had all through life.
- INT Aha that you had become used to yeah.
- RES Yes but, and talking to colleagues now, most of my close colleagues have retired but there's one still working. And she's finding it very much of a burden.
- INT Aha aha yeah. I do think, I think teaching is a very physically demanding job.
- RES Very physically demanding.
- INT Aha. It's something that I notice having stopped teaching that the kind of work I'm doing now is much less demanding in a lot of ways. And I think about teaching was just the routine of it, the actually being physically present with these thirty children to, to manage. And the kind of relentlessness of that for me was quite, you know, little

things like not being able to go to the toilet and that sort of thing [laughs]. Which I think people in normal jobs just don't understand that aspect of teaching.

RES Yes it can, well, I've never really found it so but I remember one of my colleagues saying she found it a very lonely job in that she was shut up in a class with thirty children away from all adult contact for hours at a time.

INT Aha aha aha.

RES But I can't say I ever found that. I wouldn't say it was a particular burden I don't think. I'm sorry if that came across. But certainly physically tiring and as more and more and more paperwork was thrown at you, the way things had to be done. This forecast of work became something that took entire weekends. You had to shut yourself away.

INT Yeah yeah.

RES Now I believe they've streamlined it very much. But it's...

INT Aha aha they had to streamline it because of McCrone.

RES Oh [unclear words] yes.

INT Yeah yeah. I mean the two things that came across for me as negatives for you, one was the paperwork and the other one was the sort of changing standards of behaviour and discipline.

RES I did find that very much. I think I'm probably a grumpy old woman. But just hearing the way young children speak to younger teachers and the fact that younger teachers accept it I find quite difficult.

INT Aha aha.

RES Because I feel the, completely, when I went back to do supply to a class I'd already taught, I may have told you this already, they, I couldn't believe the difference. And the, once I was, one wee boy he was just being, nice wee boy. He was just being so kind of 'yeah no no'. 'Have you finished that', 'yeah aha'. Eventually I just looked at him and said 'are you talking to me?' 'Yes Mrs [REDACTED], sorry Mrs [REDACTED]'. And I thought...I think, I think some of younger teachers did think a few of us were real fuddy duddies for insisting on silence before they left the room or I refused to talk over the top of the children. I was the same at Campaigners in the Church. I just said, 'Okay you talk if you like, I'm not talking over you', I just waited. And I think that's something that's very frustrating because we could see the standards slipping.

INT Aha. What do you think caused that slip in standards?

RES I don't know. I think maybe a change in parental attitude. A change in children's attitudes as the children are all for their rights and respect, this seems to be great word. And...I don't know, I think...I think a lot of the younger teachers wanted more to be the children's friend which is great but you've got to, you can be their friend and yet still get some kind of respect I think. So I think I had a very good relationship with children in the church. I've actually stopped doing that for the moment. But again they called me by my first name always which was a change for me but I encouraged that. But they knew how far they could go. And I think humour is so important in that.

INT Aha aha.

RES So I, whereas when I had taken over the group in the church they were almost swinging from the walls. And I can't work like this. So...

INT Aha. Do you think relationships in families are different now? I mean are, do you think the relationship that your grandchildren have with their parents is a different kind of relationship to what your children had with you?

RES In some ways, yes. That's possibly because their parents are a lot trendier than me. But in some ways I would say they do. They do things together possibly that we wouldn't have done. Yes I think in a way.

INT Aha.

RES But...

INT I mean I think, I think that, I think the relationship that we had as children with our parents was a more formal relationship than...

RES Much more so.

INT ...than what my nieces and nephews have with my siblings. I would say it's...

RES One thing I noticed, particularly in my daughter, they talk over everything with the children, absolutely everything. Some things I think perhaps would be better not spoken too much about.

INT Aha aha.

RES Whereas I think we tended, we did talk about some things but possibly we didn't talk enough about family [unclear] and things with the children, I don't know. And of course going back to my own parents we didn't talk about anything.

INT No.

RES You were told what you were doing, that was it.

INT Aha aha.

RES So I think that's quite a good change really so long as it doesn't go too far. But...I think children used to have, some of them still do, behaviour for out of school and behaviour for in school. And I think that is kind of blurred.

INT Yeah yeah.

RES Quite a bit.

INT Aha although sometimes, yeah, sometimes it's different ways. I mean in my experience sometimes you have children who are very well behaved in class and, you know, the parents would come up at parents night and tell you about all sorts of trouble they had with them at home. But then sometimes it was the other way rounds, you know.

RES Yes.

INT Some children really played up at school and their parents claimed [laughs] at least that they were well behaved at home. I remember sometimes being astonished at

some children, listening to the way that some children spoke to their parents when their parents came to collect them.

RES Yes aha.

INT Children who were very well behaved in class turned into little monsters [laughs] with their mums there.

RES Yes I think that's, I think that's very true. There's different behaviour, very surprising parents would talk about trouble with, problems with their children. But I think the children's attitude in... maybe they don't, they used to, obviously the language in the playground, oh I [unclear words] and the language was absolutely appalling. And they didn't use that kind of language in the classroom. But they didn't use, they used more playground language than, they used more than everyday language in the classroom which earlier in my teaching they would certainly have spoken to me differently from the way they would speak outside.

INT Aha yeah yeah.

RES I found that changed a little bit.

INT Yeah. But it's difficult to sort of unpack it and to understand why. And I think relationships between teachers and the pupils was probably too formal.

RES I think it was and I think in some cases it's perhaps gone the other way.

INT Aha aha.

RES I think there's a kind of happy medium. But certainly I think it goes too formal although I was just, we were clearing out yet again and came across piles and piles of photographs, a lot of school photographs. And just sitting looking at them we seem to have, we seem to be always out. That was something you could do then.

INT That was something you could do in those days yes.

RES Send a message downstairs to the head teacher saying 'we are going out for half an hour' and just go.

INT Aha that's right and you could go without any support. Nowadays you have to have umpteen parents with you and they have to be disclosed.

RES And things [unclear words].

INT [unclear words] yeah I know. I know.

RES Which I can understand but it's taken a lot of the spontaneity away.

INT It certainly has, it really has. And the other thing that took the spontaneity away was the whole pressure to timetable for everything.

RES Oh yes.

INT Whereas I think that might be changing in schools a bit now, more to, I mean there's this new policy out which is called Curriculum for Excellence which is replacing Five to Fourteen. And it's quite funny to hear our students talk about it because our students talk about it as if, you know, this is a whole new idea. And basically what it is is a

return to a thematic approach to teaching. And breaking down the boundaries between subject areas and teaching in a thematic way which was what we did twenty years ago.

RES Absolutely. You had your kind of web and your central subject and all your bits going off.

INT That's right, that's right. And this idea about children being involved in decisions about their own learning and, you know, twenty years ago we did the integrated day where children had, you know, some choice as to the order they might do things in. And you know, to me it's astonishing that it's come round as quickly as that and it makes me feel old because [laughs] it's come, it's come round full circle since when I started to teach.

RES Aha well...I had an inspection shortly before I finished. And one of the bug bears of one of the inspections particularly was we should be teaching class lessons.

INT Aha aha.

RES Now a few years earlier you kind of looked to make sure there was no head teacher [unclear words].

INT Yeah exactly exactly [laughs] exactly, I know.

RES It's...

INT It was what was regarded as good practice to change completely.

RES ...aha and that's one thing I noticed. I went through so many fashions and I stuck pretty much to my way of doing things. So I went in and out of fashion as, obviously I changed a little bit sometimes but basically I knew how I wanted to teach and that makes me sound an awful stick in the mud doesn't it!

INT Well it's amazing how, how many women that I've spoken to will say that that, that the way they coped with changes in the curriculum was, you know, to kind of pay lip service and to continue doing what they knew worked in the classroom. So, you know, there were some things you had to change. Some sort of outward things had to be changed when changes were imposed in the schools. But actually what the nitty gritty of what they did in the classroom didn't change.

RES One of the things I really enjoyed in the last few years of teaching was the amount of talk we did.

INT Yeah.

RES And the, it's quite amazing really that the things we talked about and the feedback from the children's writing, you know, they kind of did their own feedback and organised themselves and the, we used to have this method of when they were reading out those who had been chosen to read out their stories we did it kind of in alphabetical order according to their first names. And I used to just sit at the back and they would say who went next and who went next. And they would comment about it and sometimes I didn't say a word for the whole lesson.

INT Aha aha.

RES That was quite fascinating.

INT Yeah.

RES And that was completely new from the beginning of teaching when the teacher did most of the talking.

INT Yes yes yes, that kind of came in with five to fourteen, I think, because there was this emphasis of talking and listening in that along with reading and writing. Yeah which was a good thing and I think, I think especially in Scottish schools we haven't done enough of that prior to that.

RES But I meet a group of us, we used to call us the SAGA group, there were eight of us and we were all over fifty and trying hard to maintain the standards including the school janitor, he's one of the group. It's only one, well there are two actually still working. One is now in another school. But when we meet once every two or three months everybody says how glad they are to be out of it. And the two who are still teaching can't wait to get out. And that's so sad.

INT Aha aha aha, it is sad but it's...

RES It seems to be the way it's gone.

INT ...but it, but it, in my experience that is the case with teachers as they, you know, as they get into their fifties, they really really want out. And I think...I don't know, there's something about the job which I think makes it a job for relatively young people. I think it's such demanding, physically demanding...

RES Well you have more stamina when you are younger.

INT ...absolutely yeah yeah.

RES Although also possibly when you are young you have got more demands at home.

INT Aha aha.

RES But...I just find I was so, I was useless when I went home from school. And I often didn't go home until about six o'clock because I like to get myself organised in the classroom. And I was useless until about half past seven so I just wouldn't function properly latterly.

INT Yeah well I suppose lots of people do talk longingly about retirement when they get to that stage in life. And even younger [laughs], you know.

RES Hmm.

INT No matter what kind of work they are in.

RES That's true but...everyone, it's just the fact that everybody says they are so glad to be out. And I did go back and do supply for, not out of choice actually, they were just so desperate they couldn't get anybody. And so I did go back and do supply for probably two years. So I was probably about sixty three when I said enough. And last year when I got my GTC demand in I said 'I'm not renewing this, that's me, I'm out now'.

INT Right out okay okay. So you won't have done any supply then since the last time I spoke to you probably.

APPENDIX 5 - SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT TWO

DS330019sb: [REDACTED]

INT Can I move on to talking about faith. You are a Christian?

RES Aha.

INT And were you brought up in the Christian faith, in a Christian home... in England?

RES In Scotland, I was, yes.

INT So were you brought up in a Presbyterian church?

RES No, it was just a little independent Baptist church.

INT And your parents were Christians?

RES Aha.

INT I mean, How central would you say that being a Christian was to your life and your identity?

RES Well it has to be central, yes. And as far as teaching is concerned?

INT Aha.

RES I mean you need to view it from that point of view, don't you really.

INT Does it make a difference to your life as a teacher?

RES I think so, especially with the children. I'm working with the ones, you know, with learning difficulties and so on, I mean they are very much... within the education system they are trailing at the bottom, are they not? They are kind of valued in education if you are successful in language and in maths, but if you are successful in other areas and not that, you are not really a success, are you? At least children I know, and despite 'inclusion', inverted commas and so on, I mean these children are the ones, the ones I work with are the ones who don't really fit, and very often I think schools aren't quite sure what to do with them, but they are not... their needs are not really prioritised, you have to realise that they are of equal value and their learning is very important. Because they are not skilled in certain areas doesn't mean that they don't have other... I think you have got to look at what they are good at, and try to recognise that as well, because they have all got a direction they need to go in in life, and teachers really should be trying to find out what the children are good at, but there is so much pressure to get them to a certain level in maths, a certain level in language. I think a lot of them do feel quite worthless by the time they reach the end of primary school. They feel that education hasn't got much to offer them, 'Oh, I am just hopeless', you know, and they want to give up and you have got to try to sort of look at it from the point of view their worth as an individual, try to find out what skills they have and what strengths they have and show them that they are important [unclear], and that there is something that they can do and try to help them of course [unclear] difficulties. 'Cause so many of them can just sort of drop out [unclear] and they lack... they don't have a lot of confidence in themselves and they do end up feeling this sort of general opinion, unspoken sort of

message, that you really don't fit here and you really are not successful, you know. Its quite tragic really.

INT Yeah, but then you would probably think all that even if you weren't Christian, you would probably still have that same attitude to children.

RES I might do, but I don't know that there is always that attitude to children. I mean I have heard of teachers that one child couldn't do what the rest of the class was doing, and he really was extremely bored you know, and the teacher was saying, 'Take him out!' to the auxiliary, and she said, 'What shall I do with him?' 'That doesn't matter. Juust take him out!' you know, in that dismissive... take that child away, they are no use to me. Some who have particular difficulties, you know, the teachers just say that child should be away, they should be in a base [?] I can't do anything with them. You get that sort of frustration. I mean there are practical difficulties, I know that, but I think there is a different attitude: somebody take that child and do something with him, and let me get on with my class. I've seen that.

INT Yeah. What kind of place does religion have within the school that you work in? For example what might you do in assemblies?

RES Well I am never asked to assemblies, but yes I mean there are assemblies and they will sing a few choruses or whatever. There will be church services, the minister will come, [unclear] minister that comes round and speaks to the children. Again I am not in on that so I don't...

INT Is that a Church of Scotland minister?

RES Yes, aha.

INT So is the school then just, the school chaplain will just be Church of Scotland, or will it be chaplains from other...

RES Oh I think there has also been a Catholic one, I think they do alternate actually, so you will get one for part of the year and then next year or next term or whatever another will come. Yes, come to think of it, we see more than one.

INT So, but it does sound that the way of doing assembly and the way you do church services is a broadly Christian approach?

RES Yes.

INT And is there no resistance to that, from staff or parents or...

RES I think it's more tradition I think. I think if the school wanted to change it I don't know how far they could go with changing it. When I am talking about a church service, it will be an end of term service or something like that, or Christmas, it's not [unclear].

INT No, but it's still broadly Christian in a sort of cultural sense.

RES I think it's more traditional than anything else, you know.

INT But still, its still the sort of thing that I think some, both staff and parents are beginning to object to, perhaps more in big city schools, and [both talking]...

RES Multicultural classes...

INT Yeah, although the people who make the biggest noise about it are atheists, and humanists, or tend to be, rather than those from other faiths.

RES I mean, I think there is the option, you know, the child doesn't have to attend these things, so I am sure they are given the option to...

INT They are given the option, but some people would argue that schools should be absolutely secular and shouldn't involve any element of practising of any faith at all.

RES Yes, just education – that's something different, to be talked.

INT So what... do you still think it's... I mean obviously as a Christian you want to see a continuation of some kind of Christian worship through schools, but do you think that's justifiable in a multicultural society?

RES I think what exists at the moment is, I don't think there is much in it to be honest. I think it is just [both talking] a formality really, I don't think there is much there anyway. I mean, if what they had now went I don't think it would make a big difference, to be honest, really, because there isn't much there anyway.

INT Yeah.

RES I mean they sing songs and they like them if it's a jolly tune, but they... I don't think the words mean much and of course they tend to go for the ones without much content in them anyway. You wouldn't get much out of the religious practices that go on...

INT You probably wouldn't...

RES I don't think there is much there, it's a sort of left-over, I don't know... its just a tradition, a tradition without much meaning.

INT Perhaps that tradition, that kind of practising of Protestantism, the religious trappings of Protestantism if that's all it is, I think that is something that is still identifiably Scottish, isn't it? That's maybe why we keep doing it.

RES I am not sure how it would apply to south of the border, I don't know how much they have.

INT I think there is definitely an increasing secularisation of schools, of people objecting to... I mean atheists and humanists objecting to what, arguably, are just the trappings of religion.

RES I think while the trappings are there, though, it is an open door where you can have ministers coming in and people like Bible Societies and so on, they will arrange things [unclear]. There are opportunities there for something good to go in for, links to something worthwhile. If you stopped it, yes, that would cut that off.

INT Yes, and also as Christians we could argue that even that of some scripture being read or some of the truths that are in the hymns, [unclear] even though it's actually no Christian presence in the form of the minister or whoever still had influence and impact [?].

RES Yes it might be, although it's not... although I don't think... I am not sure how often they have assemblies, to be honest, it's usually a Friday when I am not here. I am rarely at one to see what... I haven't really been at many for quite a while, just the odd occasion if I happen to be there.

INT My experience was that... I mean assemblies in the schools I taught in were quite overtly Christian in the sorts of stories that were told, the bible stories and hymns and choruses were sung and the chaplain, Church of Scotland minister, would come. My experience is that most of my colleagues still thought that was the right thing to do, even though they themselves, perhaps, didn't have any particular faith, they thought of it as important. I think they thought it was an important part of culture, the children be included in that. And also parents. My experience was parents who themselves had no faith, still felt that this was an important part of childhood, to go to church, to learn some hymns and bible stories. That was my experience working in small towns, but I think that's not the way things are going in schools.

RES I haven't heard any particular objections to it amongst the staff. I don't hear the staff saying, you know, This is a waste of time... it depends who is visiting, I think. There was one particular minister who came, who really has no rapport with children whatsoever and it was a bit of a waste of time because he had lost them from the first minute or two and there were comments about that, Oh what a waste of time that is. But that was to do with a personality, not to do with the content. It was just this particular person who didn't have great skills in that direction.

INT Yes, you always get the occasional one. One of our ministers, actually I think he left and went to the Continuing, was sacked from the chaplaincy because he told an entire assembly of children that Santa was a lie... didn't go down well...

RES Which happens to be true, but you can't tell that kind of truth.

INT Didn't go down well, and then... yes, but it's rather silly of him to do that, a very silly thing to do...

RES It is actually, yeah.

INT He went on to claim Christian persecution for the fact that he was asked not to come back.

RES I don't think [unclear].

INT So are any of...

RES Insensitivity I think.

INT I think insensitivity is a mild word to use for [both talking]. Are any of your colleagues Christians?

RES No.

INT So do you find any issues with being Christian in your work [unclear]?

RES Well I think due to the nature of my job, I am very much doing my own thing in a corner anyway, so it's not, you know... I don't think...

INT What made you start worshipping in a Presbyterian Church when your background was Baptist?

RES I was looking for somewhere to go, and I just happened to hear about that one and went along, still there.

INT And do you find it different, significantly?

RES Not fundamentally, no, [unclear] details I suppose.

INT Do you not in that sense, I know myself as a women in the Free Church, I actually find that quite difficult position to be in, personally. I find there is lots of things that irritate me and frustrate me, and make me feel that some women are not quite full citizens – do you never feel like that?

RES Laughs... No.

INT Do you not?

RES No. Some people are more sensitive to these things than others. I don't know.

INT I find that quite fascinating, because I would have thought, I don't know, I just thought somebody like you would have, and I know somebody like my sister finds it quite difficult. She goes along with it, but... and even my mum, you know, looking back on her life in the Church, feels that being a women in the Free Church has positioned her in a particular way that...

RES I think there are some expectations like if the women prepare the lunch or do the dishes, but there are men doing this as well.

INT Well there are some men doing it, yeah.

RES I mean men are involved in things that I think they would assume that women would do, like being on crèche duty, but I think that's just the parents, you know, fathers who are roped into that, I'm not sure. But there are men doing that and in teaching the children, making soups for lunches and doing the dishes.

INT But I mean, as an intelligent, accomplished women, do you not have no sense of frustration at the fact that the sorts of expectations of you as a women in the Church are for most part pretty domestic?

RES Well, if anybody else needs a cook they won't ask me twice, it is not my strong point at all. I don't know, I am just trying to think what expectations are of me... I don't know. I mean some things are particularly men's roles obviously, like the preaching, obviously, but that's a good reason for that. But do you mean just in the kind of routine jobs and activities and so on?

INT Well I suppose I do, and I suppose I mean, OK, you might accept from a faith position that women shouldn't be elders and ministers... it's pretty hard to argue that we can't do the work of the deacons, and yet there is no... you know the work the deacons do is very much administrative and looking after the church building, finances. There is really no theological reasons how you can't be involved in that [?].

RES No, they are practical issues... I have never really looked into that.

INT And also when it comes to things like, for example, one obvious example is precenting: that's always done by men, [both talking].

RES I've been to the Perth Free Church and there was a women precenting, and there is another one?

INT Very occasionally.

RES We went to somewhere else and it was a woman... although she didn't come out to the front, it was a minute little congregation... I don't see why it shouldn't be a woman precenting. There's no...

INT But in practice it is not.

RES That's just tradition isn't it, but...

INT But is it not a tradition that you find really frustrating...

RES Well, I wouldn't want to precent, so it doesn't bother me. But I don't know whether that's a rule or it's just because certain men usually do it, or

INT I suppose it's really a...

RES If a woman decided to do it, you know [both talking]. Perhaps she can't pitch it at the right level.

INT There is no reason why women shouldn't do it [both talking]. The fact of the matter is that, for example in Bon Accord, that women would never be asked unless in the direst circumstances, in which a man just absolutely couldn't be found. You know that's the culture, that's the way it works.

RES Yes it always has been, but I have never sort of investigated to find out whether that's just because no woman has ever happened to be interested or whether there is a definite reason why they wouldn't ask a woman.

INT Yeah.

RES And never been sure whether it wouldn't be done or just hadn't been.

INT It pretty much hasn't been done, but that in itself has to do with cultures which keep women in their place, you know. I mean, arguably there is theological reasons why women shouldn't preach and shouldn't be elders, so arguably that's acceptable that they have developed a culture that excludes women from that. But I would argue that it's not acceptable that we have developed a culture which excludes women from things like precenting, and things like looking after the church finances, for example.

RES — I wouldn't touch these things with a barge-pole... but I can't see a reason why not, yes.

INT So given that you can't see any reason why not, does it not annoy you that that's the way it happens?

RES Laughter. I have never studied that particular point. Perhaps the women just haven't shouted loud enough hope. Perhaps they are like me and are perfectly happy not to be involved.

INT And that in itself is really interesting, yeah.

RES I think it would be frustrating if you were a financial genius. I mean, see how the books ought to have been done. I think that ought to go to the person who is best equipped to do that, logically speaking. So many things like, you know, the Free Church College Course, the Saturday course, there are plenty of women on that, and I go to that.

INT You are going to that?

RES Yeah, its great.